A Cultural History of Sound in England 1560-1760

Emily Jane Cockayne
Jesus College

A dissertation submitted to the University of Cambridge for the degree of Ph.D. (History) April, 2000.

E.J. COCKAYNE - A CULTURAL HISTORY OF SOUND IN ENGLAND 1560-1760

Sounds both penetrate bodies and emanate from them, and in this thesis I consider both the reception and deployment of sounds in a variety of social contexts - an aural history of England between 1560 and 1760. I confine my analysis to nonverbal and non-musical sounds which were made both deliberately and incidentally, voluntarily and involuntarily, and ask, under what conditions were sounds meaningful?

The concern of Chapter 2 is the sense of hearing - how and when it was appreciated or confused, and how it could be sharpened, or dulled and deafened. The experiences of the deaf are also discussed, with a distinction made between the congenitally deaf, and those who became deaf after they had developed verbal language skills.

The third chapter considers body sounds, such as belching, farting and sighing, and the factors which influenced their suppression or enhancement. The chapter explores in depth the various functions of laughing and crying, highlighting differences in behaviour between different social and demographic groups.

Sound signals - sounds which warned that something was happening or would happen - are the subject of the fourth chapter. The discussion commences with an investigation of sounds which were thought to indicate future disasters, to provide clues about health, or to forecast weather. However, the bulk of the chapter is devoted to signals which were deliberately issued in the public realm in order to convey information, warn of calamities, announce deaths, instruct and gather communities, and mark temporal, social and spatial divisions. Chapter 5 extends this discussion by exploring the ways that secular and ecclesiastical authorities tried to control the apparatus of signalling, and by considering both the success of such attempts and the efficacy of sound signalling.

Aggressive sounds feature in Chapter 6. The manner in which aggression was expressed depended on the status of the aggressor and the person towards whom aggression was directed; inferiors were subjected to crude and harsh sounds, while caution was required when projecting aggressive sounds at superiors.

Chapter 7 analyses early modern conceptions of noise - sounds which were considered to be irritating. It explores the various contexts of noise, and shows how people manipulated their environment to reduce noise disturbance, through legal means and by altering buildings.

Contents

Illustrations

Illustrations

Preface

The genesis of this thesis was in a discussion I had as an undergraduate in 1994 with the late Bob Scribner. His enthusiasm and encouragement catalysed my research and I miss him greatly. Two contrasting but complementary supervisors have guided my research. Keith Wrightson and Ulinka Rublack have both provided support and incisive criticism, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them. I am also grateful to Mary Laven, Jason Scott-Warren and Natasha Glaisyer, who have contributed to the development of my ideas in important ways.

I could not have carried out this research without a grant from the British Academy, and without shelter and funding from Jesus College, Cambridge, and Magdalen College, Oxford.

My aural environment has been transformed during the research by a move from a Cambridge flat within spitting distance of two noisy pubs, to a quiet cottage in the Cotswolds. The first milieu led me to sympathise with Samuel Pepys, who, when in Cambridge in May 1668 'lay well ill by reason of some drunken scholars making a noise all night'.

Lastly, I wish to thank my husband, Ben, for his patience, which has allowed us to live quietly together while I toiled to produce this document.

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration. It does not exceed the word limit of 80,000 words.

Conventions and Abbreviations

Quotations from original sources retain the original spelling and punctuation, except that I/j and u/v have been distinguished, and 'th' has been substituted for diphthong 'y' when appropriate. Archaic monetary values are retained in quotations. All dates are in the old style, but with the new year beginning on January 1.

The following abbreviated forms have been used in the footnotes:

Published Works

Babees Book, Frederick J. Furnivall (ed.), *The Babees Book, Aristotle's ABC, Urbanitatis, Stans Puer as mensam, etc. The Bokes of Nurture of H. Rhodes and J. Russell. W. de Worde's Boke of Kerûynge, the Booke of Demeanor, the Boke of Curtasye, Seager's Scoole of Vertue, etc. With some French and Latin poems of like subjects, and some forewords on education in early England*, Early English Text Society, orig. ser., 32 (London, 1868)

Bacon, *Works*, James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis and Douglas Denon Heath (eds), *The Works of Francis Bacon*, 14 vols, (London, 1857-74)

Boswell's London Journal, Frederick A. Pottle (ed.), *Boswell's London Journal 1762-63* (London, 1950)

Epicoene, Ben Jonson, *Epicoene or the Silent Woman*, ed. L.A. Beaurline (London, 1966)

Evelyn, E. S. de Beer (ed.), *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 6 vols (London, 1955)

Josselin,	Alan MacFarlane (ed.), *The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683*, Records of Social and Economic History, new ser., 3 (Oxford, 1976)
Nashe, *Works*,	Ronald B. McKerrow (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 5 vols (London, 1910)
Pepys,	Robert Latham and William Matthews (eds), *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, 11 vols (London, 1970-83)
Ryder,	William Matthews (trans. and ed.), *The Diary of Dudley Ryder, 1715-1716* (London, 1939)

Archival Sources

BL	British Library
CLRO	The Corporation of London Record Office
GL	Guildhall Library
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives

MJ/ Middlesex sessions records

- SBR Sessions of the peace register
- SBB Sessions of the peace book
- SR Sessions of the peace roll
  - Ind Indictment number
  - Rec Recognizance number
  - HOC House of Correction lists

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Attempts to forge a greater understanding of past human communication and perception, through studies of orality, gestures, smells, tears and touch are gradually loosening the traditional fixation on the written word.[1] While literacy increased during the early modern period, oral communication remained dominant. Historians who examine the slow transition from an oral to a literate culture usually consider only the role of spoken or written words, ignoring nonverbal or nonvocal sounds. As the study of all sounds, including words and music, over two centuries would be an unwieldy project, I have selected only nonverbal and unmusical sounds as a subject of analysis here. The inclusion of words and music would submerge more simple sounds such as laughing, crying, bell-ringing, trumpeting, hissing, huzzaing and sighing, which were relatively infrequently mentioned in early modern documents.[2] Since soundmaking was universally accessible, studying simple sounds pushes the remit of historical enquiry beyond the literate and vociferous elite. As sounds both penetrate bodies and emanate from them, in this thesis I will consider both their reception and deployment in a variety of social contexts - an aural history of England between 1560 and 1760. I will examine sounds which were made both deliberately and incidentally, voluntarily and involuntarily, and ask under what conditions were sounds meaningful?

---

[1] Ruth Finnegan, *Literacy and Orality, studies in the technology of communication* (London, 1988); Adam Fox, 'Aspects of the oral culture and its development in early modern England' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge, 1992); Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (eds), *A Cultural History of Gesture from Antiquity to the Present Day* (Oxford, 1991); Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant. Odour and the Social Imagination* (London, 1986); Anne Vincent-Buffault, *The History of Tears. Sensibility and Sentimentality in France* (Basingstoke, 1991); Gabriel Josipovici, *Touch, an essay* (New Haven, 1996).

[2] Music and words have not, however, been entirely eliminated from this study, as they were occasionally identified not for their verbal or musical qualities, but were heard as sounds, or noises. The consideration of the Word of God in Chapter 2 is vital to the assessment of the value of the sense of hearing for religious purposes, but the discussion does not centre on the 'Word'.

Cultural and art historians, and scholars of English literature have made occasional excursions into this territory, typically in florid evocations of the sounds of a particular place at a particular time, but few have directly addressed the use or perception of sounds.[3] Six notable exceptions who have considered sounds explicitly in their research are: Guy Thuillier, Bruce R. Smith, Richard Leppert, Peter Bailey, Michael Roberts, and Alain Corbin. Their approaches can be loosely categorised as either descriptive or analytical.

The work of both Thuillier and Smith is largely descriptive, and both aim to sketch particular 'soundscapes'. 'Soundscape' is a term used to describe a complete auditory environment, analogous to the viewed 'landscape'.[4] Thuillier compiles an inventory of sounds which might have been heard by a villager of the Nivernais region in nineteenth-century France. The sounds he describes include bells, hammers at the anvil, the muffled knocks of the butcher's knife, and the creaking of the pump, and Thuillier guesses which sounds the villagers might have found to be noisy.[5] In the *Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (1999) Bruce R. Smith uses literary texts to chart the soundscape of England. Journeying through three types of soundscape - city, country and court - Smith describes the sounds (all sounds, including words and music) which comprised their aural backdrop. London's bells, trades and traffic feature in a reconstruction of urban

---

[3] See, for example, Liza Picard, *Restoration London* (London, 1997), pp 16, 46, 67; Penelope Corfield, 'Walking the City Streets. The Urban Odyssey in Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of Urban History*, 16 (1990), 132-74, pp. 144-5; Richard B. Schwartz, *Daily Life in Johnson's London* (Madison, Wis., 1983), pp. 18-19; William H. Irving, *John Gay's London. Illustrated from the poetry of the time* (Cambridge, 1928), pp. 150-87; W.G. Bell, *Unknown London* (1919), ed. E.R. Wethersett (London, 1966), pp. 205-13. Bell-ringing has received attention, but mostly from antiquarians, and the sound of bells is rarely the focus of their work, but rather their manufacture and patterns of change-ringing. David Cressy has mapped ceremonial and national ringing patterns in *Bonfires and Bells. National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (London, 1989), and this work is discussed in Chapter 4.

[4] Michael Southworth describes his study of the Boston soundscape in 'The sonic environment of cities', *Environment and Behavior*, 1 (1969) 49-70.

[5] Guy Thuillier, 'Les bruits', in *Pour une histoire du quotidien au XIXe siècle en Nivernais* (Paris, 1977), pp. 230-5.

sounds, in which Smith examines how the acoustic properties of both the built and the natural environment shaped the aural experience of town dwellers. For his study of the soundscapes of the country, Smith relies heavily on literal, pictorial and cartographic representations of rural landscapes. In his evocation of the hum of court Smith explains that much of the business of the courtiers was carried out through whispers, and much of their time was spent 'listening and rumouring'. In 'Within', the second section of his book, Smith explores the ways that words, sounds and music were used to disseminate ideas and share experiences. After an extended discussion of the May festivities at Wells in 1607, Smith introduces the sounds of celebration and community relations and discusses the design of London's theatres and the experience of theatre-going. Smith's approach is not entirely descriptive, he considers the notion that each culture has a distinctive way of understanding the world through sound and in his final section compares early modern England with the communities on its 'borders' (Wales, Ireland, Virginia and New England).[6]

Although soundscaping might allow an immersion into the experience of everyday life in a past society, the approach is fundamentally flawed by a lack of reliable evidence. Modern soundscape theorist Raymond Murray Schafer admits that the tracing of 'soundscape morphology - at least up to the invention of the tape recorder will always be largely a matter of guesswork'.[7] Denied sound-recordings, the historian must rely primarily on earwitness accounts, but these are unreliable as some sounds fail to attract attention, and some are emphasised. Perception involves the selective identification of objects - in this case particular sounds - from a background.[8] The perception of sound is complicated by the fact that it comes

---

[6] Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England. Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago, 1999).
[7] Raymond Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World* (New York, 1977) p. 162.
[8] David Kelley, *The Evidence of the Senses. A Realist Theory of Perception* (London, 1986), p. 36.

from a source, and is therefore directional, but that sounds also combine to flood spaces, and are therefore also encompassing.[9] As a report of what could be heard in a typical minute of attention might fill several pages, those sounds which were noted must have attracted the commentator's attention; perhaps because they were particularly loud, intrusive or melodious.[10] There can not be a single soundscape, because individuals are positioned differently and posses varying hearing capacities and listening interests. A purportedly definitive auditory 'image' is inevitably infected with exaggeration and partiality, and is also likely to be banal.

Soundscaping only allows the historian to describe the sounds which an individual might have heard at a given time, it does not explain why certain sounds were listened for while others were ignored, or what motivated the issue of a particular sound. Thuillier's judgements about the tolerability of noise (as nuisance) are flawed by his failure to recognise that the sounds he identifies would have been noticed sporadically and separately, rather than simultaneously, and that individuals register certain sounds which are useful or discordant, while pushing others to the background. Alain Corbin criticises Thuillier for the implication that universal models of attention, perception and sensitivity to sound and noise exist, thereby denying the historicity of the balance of the senses. 'It is as if' notes Corbin, 'the habitus of the Nivernais villager of the nineteenth century did not condition his hearing, and so his listening.'[11] Catching snatches of what folk might have heard does little to deepen our understanding of what they listened for or how they reacted to what they heard. Despite making a useful introductory distinction between 'hearing' (as instinctive and passive) and 'listening' (an active, socially and culturally determined response), Smith ultimately neglects the

---

[9] Don Ihde, *Sense and Significance*, Philosophical Series, 31 (Pittsburgh, 1973), p. 72. See also his *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound* (Athens, Ohio, 1976).
[10] Kelley, *The Evidence of the Senses*, p. 46.
[11] Alain Corbin, *Time, Desire, and Horror. Towards a History of the Senses*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1995), p. 183.

ramifications of this difference in his work.[12] A preoccupation with the banal is evident in *The Acoustic World* - 'If fruit happened to be the shopkeeper's stock in trade, loud chomps might be added to the ambient noise' - and also with the extraordinary, such as lavish royal entries and mayoral installations, thus Smith tends towards a romanticised view of the past.[13]

Although claiming to explore 'sonoric landscapes' Richard Leppert actually pursues a much less descriptive and more analytical approach than his term implies. Restricting his analysis largely to music, Leppert investigates the 'sonoric landscapes' of England and the Low Countries between 1600 and 1900, concentrating on the relationship of music and the human body.[14] Unlike Thuillier and Smith, Leppert pays more attention to the fact that soundscapes are peopled, interactive and therefore constantly shifting. His definition of 'sonoric landscapes' allows greater scope to consider which sounds were listened for and how sounds were apprehended. Leppert raises four important considerations:

> (1) that sounds surround us, helping to construct us as human subjects and to locate us in particular social and cultural environments; (2) that sounds produced or manipulated by humans result from conscious acts and hence carry a semantic and discursive charge; (3) that all sounds - even those not produced by humans but "merely" heard by them - can be read and interpreted; and (4), drawn from the preceding three, that sounds are a means by which people account for their versions of reality: as it was, is and/or might be. That is, people do not employ sounds arbitrarily, haphazardly, or unintentionally - though the "intentionally" haphazard may itself constitute an important sort of sonoric discourse.[15]

Rather than examining the broader 'soundscape' Peter Bailey, Michael Roberts and Alain Corbin have all chosen to study more discrete types of sound

---

[12] See Smith, *The Acoustic World*, pp. 3-29 for an analysis of hearing and listening.
[13] Smith, *The Acoustic World, passim.*
[14] Richard Leppert, *The Sight of Sound. Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (London, 1993).
[15] Leppert, *The Sight of Sound*, p. 15.

for their work. Bailey, whose focus is the sounds of Victorian society, divides his attention between sounds of merriment, embarrassment and terror. For merriment he concentrates on laughter, which is one type of sound which has received attention from historians and cultural analysts. For embarrassment he engages with investigations into rules of decorum which govern the issuing of bodily sounds by concentrating on flatulence. For terror he explores the deployment of sounds in war and by the angry crowd.[16] Bailey's short article reads more like a manifesto to encourage others to investigate sounds rather than a fully considered analysis.

Michael Roberts investigates reactions to tom-tom beating and singing in British Ceylon in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Regarding these sounds as noises of cultural struggle Roberts highlights the experience of Britons who worked there. When the soldiers were unable to sleep because of drumming and singing, the officers issued ordinances designed to regulate nocturnal sounds. These actions caused tension, as the control of noise represented a clash of cultural principles. By targeting particular sounds and by classifying them as noise the British also changed the attitudes of other inhabitants of the region to these sounds.[17]

Alain Corbin also takes a case-study approach for his work both on village bells and industrial noises of nineteenth- and twentieth-century France, establishing a useful conceptual framework for the study of aural history.[18] In *Village Bells* Corbin explores the ways that the sounds of bellringing were connected with time,

---

[16] Peter Bailey, 'Breaking the sound barrier: a historian listens to noise' in *Body and Society*, 2 (1996), 49-66.

[17] Michael Roberts, 'Noise as cultural struggle: Tom-tom beating, the British and communal disturbances in Sri Lanka, 1880s-1930s', in Veena Das (ed.), *Mirrors of Violence. Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia* (Oxford, 1990).

[18] Alain Corbin, *Les Cloches de la Terre* (1994) - published in English as *Village Bells. Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-century French Countryside*, trans. Martin Thom (Basingstoke, 1999); also, *Time, Desire, and Horror.*

identity, civic pride, community and territory, and he highlights the communicative value of bells, the ways they were used to transmit messages. Corbin describes both the functions of village bells and their control, detailing how the leaders of the new Republican government tried to limit their use by monopolising them for secular and municipal ends at the expense of religious usage. The dissemination of printed notices and the proliferation of private clocks in the second half of the nineteenth century undermined bell utility in rural France and consequently campanological history pivots at the moment when the illiterate became a minority. Yet a cessation of bellringing also aroused great indignation and was considered by some to be an attack on individual, local, or familial honour.[19]

In *Time, Desire and Horror*, Corbin shows that industrial noises, whilst never being a major cause for complaint, became increasingly regarded as a nuisance, especially after 1866. Corbin also shows how heavy symbolism accrued to well-established sounds and highlights the collective attachment some communities developed towards certain sounds. In 1944 the church tower of the village of Lonlay-l'Abbaye in Normandy was destroyed and the traditional ringing was replaced by the fire brigade siren installed on the village hall. As the local farmers grew accustomed to the new sound, and organised their work according to it, the siren came to symbolise modernity. In 1958 the tower was rebuilt and the municipal council decided to resume bell-ringing, but the farmers preferred the siren, which was clearer and louder, and hence more useful than the bells. When the leaders of the 'anti-siren party' championed the aesthetic qualities and emotional appeal of bronze, the village hall was pelted with stones and those inside were subjected to the humiliating sounds of 'rough music'. Eventually the mayor brokered a compromise whereby everyday at noon a siren blared whilst the bells chimed, thus restoring some form of harmony. Corbin asserts that an

---

[19] Corbin, *Village Bells, passim.*

understanding of this episode would be enhanced by an analysis of anthropological structures, as it highlights divisions between town and country, utility and aesthetics, and shifting thresholds of tolerance to noise.[20]

Whereas Bruce Smith's notion of 'early modern' rarely reaches before the late-sixteenth century or beyond the mid-seventeenth century, for my study I embrace a longer time span, allowing me to trace shifts in the perception and creation of sounds. Anthropologist Nadia Seremetakis asserts that sensory changes 'occur microscopically through everyday accretion'. These slow shifts are hidden at the time, only to become apparent 'after the fact'. Therefore, she argues, it is only by tracing such shifts over a long period of time that 'a passageway into the social unconscious and the historical structure of inattention' can be found.[21]

England between the years 1560 and 1760 might seem like a strange period in which to study sounds, as it falls after many of the church reforms and before large-scale industrialisation. Yet this period did witness significant social change, including expanding urbanisation, the increasing professionalisation of work and the growth of literacy. The period saw both a gradual incorporation of religious changes into people's everyday lives and periods of great political instability. All of these factors had an impact on the use and interpretation of sounds. Incorporating the years before the Reformation would necessitate too great a bias towards the study of ecclesiastical sounds, while stretching much after 1760 would create a bias towards the noise of industrialisation. Sources are drawn from many parts of the country, although inevitably much of England has not been covered explicitly. Material for London is most frequently cited, as it is more extensive. Some findings, however, can often be extrapolated for the whole country, subject

---

[20] Corbin, *Time, Desire, and Horror,* pp. 150-6, 181-95.
[21] C. Nadia Seremetakis, 'Intersection: Benjamin, Bloch, Braudel, Beyond', in C. Nadia Seremetakis (ed.), *The Senses Still. Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity* (Chicago, 1996), p. 20.

to an acknowledgement that urban, rural and coastal experiences were different and that sounds took on different meanings in different locations, and at different times of the day and year.

The vast majority of sounds made or heard in early modern England were never transcribed or depicted.[22] Noting that 'All sound is exceeding quickly generated and quickly perishes', Francis Bacon highlighted the greatest limitation in the study of sounds - their ephemerality.[23] As commonplace and ubiquitous sounds were rendered inaudible by their mundaneness, sources are often biased towards the atypical.[24] This atypicality must be recognised.

There is a more fundamental problem than the atypicality of sources however, and this concerns transcription. The sounds of early modern England must be approached through a study of words and images which cannot adequately capture sonic experiences.[25] Although there were conventional ways of spelling or describing sounds such as belching, blubbering and humming, personal experience of these sounds is required before they can be recognised. Some attempts to record the sounds made by animals or people were quite specific, for example, laughter could be transcribed as 'He, he, he, he', or 'ho, ho, ho'.[26] Some dictionary

---

[22] 'We never cease living in the world of perception, but we bypass it in critical thought', Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception and other essays on phenomenological psychology, the philosophy of art, history and politics*, trans. and ed. James M. Edie (Evanston, 1964), p. 3.
[23] Francis Bacon, translation of his 'The History and First Inquisition of Sound and Hearing', in Basil Montagu (ed.), *The Works of Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England*, 16 vols (London, 1825-36) XV, p. 243. Adam Fox, facing the same problem whilst exploring the oral culture of early modern England, noted that much evidence evaporated at source, 'Aspects of the oral culture', p. 126. Jonathan Rée, *I See a Voice. A Philosophical History of Language, Deafness and the Senses* (London, 1999), p. 23 - 'The basic truth about sounds, it would seem, is that they never last.'
[24] As Keith Basso noted, 'natives everywhere take their "natives point of view" very much for granted', Keith H. Basso, '"Speaking with names" - Language and Landscape Among the Western Apache', in George E. Marcus (ed.), *Rereading Cultural Anthropology* (London, 1992), p. 221.
[25] Leanne Hinton, Johanna Nichols and John J. Ohala, 'Introduction: Sound symbolic processes' in Leanne Hinton, Johanna Nichols and John J. Ohala (eds) *Sound Symbolism* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 2; Roger Chapman, *The Treatment of Sounds in Language and Literature* (Oxford, 1984), p. 12.
[26] 'Simon Wagstaff' [Jonathan Swift], *A Complete Collection of Genteel and Ingenious Conversation According to the most Polite Mode and Method now used at Court, and in the Best Companies of England*, repr. of the 1755 edn (Bristol, 1995), pp. 159, 161, 193; Keith Thomas, 'The Place of Laughter in Tudor and Stuart England', *Times Literary Supplement*, 21 January 1977, 77-81, p. 77.

definitions were very precise. James Buchanan defined the verb to scream as 'To cry out in an articulate manner, but in a hoarser key than a shrick', and 'rumble' as 'to make a noise like the rolling of a large ball running upon a hollow floor.'[27] When curate and author Henry Peacham explained the term 'onomatopeia' in 1577 he included the sounds of buzzing and humming bees, the 'mooting' of beasts, the 'blating' of sheep and 'thwick thwack' to describe blows - 'thwick' being a lesser blow than 'thwack'. These words, he explained, 'resemble the sound, or be strangely fayned.'[28] For Thomas Blundeville, essential to the *Arte of Ryding* (1560) was the ability to make a sound 'by tourninge up the typp of your tonge, almoste into the midde palat of youre mouthe, and then sodenlie loosen it again from thence with a chirke' in order to encourage a horse. He also suggested that horses might respond to the 'powghe' sound made when tightly closed tips are suddenly opened.[29] Like Peacham, Randle Holme, a seventeenth-century heraldist, also attempted to describe the sounds of animals, noting how the goat 'Rotteleth', the weasel 'Squaketh', the owl 'woo-woo wooeth' and that the 'Humbo Bee' (bumble bee) 'makes a more Humming noise than the ordinary Hive, or Honey-Bee, from thense it hath its name.'[30] Samuel Johnson remarked that hissing 'cannot be produced without making the noise which it signifies'.[31] Yet, even onomatopoeic words were inadequate renditions of sounds. The eighteenth-century philosopher, Abraham Tucker, highlighted the inadequacy of words to describe

---

[27] James Buchanan, *Linguae Britannicae Vera Pronunciatio: or, A New dictionary* (London, 1757), s.v. 'scream' and 'rumble'.

[28] Henry Peacham (the elder), *The Garden of Eloquence, conteyning the figures of Grammer and rhetorick, from whence maye bee gathered all manner of Flowers, Coulors, Ornaments, exornations, forms, and fashions of speech* (London, 1577), s.v. 'Onomatopeia'.

[29] Thomas Blundeville, *The Arte of Ryding* (London, 1560), sigs B6v-B7. See also John Baret, *An Alvearie or Quadruple Dictionarie* (London, 1580), s.v. 'Clacke - A clacking with the tong to cheere a horse'.

[30] Randle Holme, *An Academy of Armory, or, A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon*, 3 parts (Chester, 1688) III, pp. 134, 190-2, 310; see also William Baldwin, *Beware the Cat* (1570), ed. William A. Ringler Jnr, and Michael Flachmann (San Marino, 1988), p. 32.

[31] Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1755), s.v. 'hiss'.

animal sounds, arguing, 'I certainly do not hear the "m" in the "mm" of "moo" ascribed to the cow... if you attend to the hog himself you will find he spells his grunt without either "g" or "nt"'.[32]

When sounds are transcribed in historical sources they are lifted out of context, making it difficult to gauge elements such as pitch, volume, inflexion and intrusiveness. The manner in which such sounds were issued is usually lost through transcription, yet the meaning of a sound might have rested on the volume, pitch or harshness of its delivery. The difference between a 'hesitant titter' and an 'assured guffaw', is significant.[33] In transcription the accent of the sound is often lost, and as a consequence the meaning is subtly changed. Laughter may be sinister in one context but not in another, the speed and pitch of a laugh and the accompanying facial expression all create a particular meaning, and yet the sound might be recorded merely as a 'laugh'. Diarist Henry Newcome worried that he 'used too free a word to expresse my dislike tow[ards]: Dr Br. in what he delivered, saying, in jest he was a *rascall*. That word repeated not with my accent might seeme very strange for mee to utter.'[34] Although Newcome was referring to the transcription of words, nonverbal sounds are also subject to the same problem.

The language used to describe sounds is affected by imprecision and inertia. Words did not always keep pace with conceptual developments. Early modern people continued to describe things with expressions which had once been literal but which had become metaphorical. In the early-eighteenth century, antiquarian Henry Bourne asserted that although superstitious sayings were 'still in the Mouths of all', they were not universally observed.[35] The term 'drumming up

---

[32] 'Edward Search' [Abraham Tucker], *Vocal Sounds* (London, 1773), pp. 139-40.
[33] Michael Screech, *Laughter at the Foot of the Cross* (London, 1997), p. xv.
[34] Thomas Heywood (ed), *The Diary of the Rev. Henry Newcome, from September 30, 1661 to September 29, 1663*, The Chetham Society, 18 (Manchester, 1849), p. 189 (1 June 1663).
[35] Henry Bourne, *Antiquitates Vulgares; Or, the Antiquities of the Common People* (Newcastle, 1725), p. 70.

support' is still used in modern parlance, but no longer refers to the literal use of a drum to gather volunteers. Alain Corbin has criticised Anne Vincent-Buffault for her literal interpretation of metaphors and literary conventions in *The History of Tears.*[36]

Employment of the senses is not uniform across cultures, and some believe, or have believed, that the repertoire of senses is not limited to five.[37] Anthropologists have shown that the employment of the senses is not constant across time, and that the senses are mutable. Constance Classen identifies the continuous process of 'sensory mingling', whereby the cultural meanings of the senses become intertwined.[38] 'The word hear', she notes 'is itself a sensory transposition, as it developed from the Indo-European base qeu-, meaning to look at, perceive.'[39] Classen maintains that the senses are not ordered simply by natural responses, but that their use is influenced by social conditioning. Anthropologist Max Baumann asserts that hearing has a constructed reality; it is 'a product of psychophysical experience and culturally related communication.'[40] Several anthropologists, aware that people learn to organise their senses according to their environment, have studied the ways that sensory experiences vary between cultures.[41] If the senses are shifting it is likely that our modern perspective on the sensorium might 'blind' us to the subtleties of past sensory experiences.

---

[36] Corbin *Time, Desire and Horror*, p. 190

[37] For a discussion of this see David Howes and Constance Classen, ' Sounding Sensory Profiles', in David Howes (ed.), *The Varieties of Sensory Experience. A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses* (Toronto, 1991), pp. 257-9.

[38] Constance Classen, 'Words of sense' in *Worlds of Sense. Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures* (London, 1993), pp. 50-76.

[39] *ibid.* p. 52.

[40] Max Peter Baumann, 'The Ear as Organ of Cognition: Prolegomenon to the Anthropology of Listening' in Max Peter Baumann, Artur Simon and Ulrich Wegner (eds), *European Studies in Ethnomusicology. Historical Developments and Recent Trends* (Wihelmshaven, 1992), 123-42, p. 124.

[41] Influential contributors include; Paul Stoller, *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: The Senses in Anthropology* (Philadelphia, 1989); Howes (ed.), *Varieties of Sensory Experience;* Constance Classen, David Howes and Anthony Synnott, *Aroma. The cultural history of smell* (London, 1994).

So, to summarise, there are problems which frustrate a study of the sounds of early modern England: the sources might refer to atypical sounds; sounds have been recorded in verbal or pictorial forms; and the use of the sense of hearing is not uniform. These problems can be ameliorated, to some degree, by acceptance and awareness. Although problematic, written texts are the most important sources by which we can gain access to past sensory experiences, and as long as they are used carefully they will inform much about those experiences.

As there is little coherent discussion of sounds in studies by historians, I have sought direction from sociologists, social linguists and social and cultural anthropologists who have either considered the ways that sounds are heard and made, or whose arguments and theories are applicable to the study of sounds. Social linguists have examined the issue of sounds from the human body, and specific studies concern 'paralanguage', those nonverbal sounds which although not typically considered to be part of language, do nonetheless communicate meanings and feelings.[42] Sociologists Erving Goffman and Norbert Elias have considered the appropriateness of body sounds in particular contexts.[43] It is interesting to apply Pierre Bourdieu's work on symbolic language to the coded use of sounds which created early modern English signals.[44] James C. Scott's study of ways of dominating and of resisting domination can be applied to a study of the employment of sounds in the social relationships of early modern England.[45]

Anthropologist David Howes argues that anyone involved in researching the senses should examine how they have been utilised variously by different

---

[42] Peter F. Ostwald, *The Semiotics of Human Sound* (The Hague, 1973); Fernando Poyatos, *Paralanguage. A linguistic and interdisciplinary approach to interactive speech and sound* (Amsterdam, 1993).

[43] Erving Goffman, *Behavior in Public Places. Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings* (New York, 1963); Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process. The History of Manners*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford, 1978).

[44] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, 1992).

[45] James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, 1985) and his *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, 1990).

cultures.[46] Learning from anthropological studies would permit an exploration of the possible ways that the senses can be used and valued by other cultures.[47] I have studied the work of Steven Feld, who has conducted fieldwork amongst the Kaluli people of Papua New Guinea since 1976, paying particular attention to their perceptions of sounds. In *Sound and Sentiment* (second edition published in 1990) Feld concentrated his attention on the symbolic importance of sounds such as birdsong and weeping in Kaluli ritual life. Some bird sounds are interpreted by the Kaluli as messages from the dead, birds which call from trees at the edges of the village cannot be hunted as they are believed to embody Kaluli ancestors. Only those birds considered to have a sweet song are fed to Kaluli children, as it is believed that if children eat birds with unpleasant calls they will not develop proper speech patterns, but will become phlegmy, hoarse or unintelligible. Individuals can be likened to birds which make sounds which reflect their personality. Feld also explores the use of types of crying in ceremonial display. For the Kaluli, weeping is closely associated with death and loss and is a spontaneous embodiment of sadness. Here the speed and melody of the weeping is indicative of emotion and carries a particular significance, and the deployment of certain types of weeping is gender specific. Feld noted that in response to another person's weeping, a Kaluli person will confirm that they understand the emotion it expresses by making a soft click with their mouth and by moving their head and shoulders. Feld discovered that fast crying, for example, was an expressive form primarily practised by women. This weeping eventually moves the women to song. Whilst he

---

[46] Howes, *The Varieties of Sensory Experience*, p. 3.

[47] Hans Medick has written a valuable summary of the use of anthropology for historical inquiry, in '"Missionaries in the Rowboat"? Ethnological Ways of Knowing as a Challenge to Social History' in Alf Lüdtke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life. Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, trans. William Templer (Princeton, 1995), pp. 46-50. Jordan Goodman alerts historians to the dangers in paddling in anthropological waters, and of selecting only one anthropologist to guide their work, 'History and Anthropology', in Michael Bentley (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (London, 1997), p. 783.

emphasises the symbolic aspect of sounds, Feld also gives fleeting consideration to the practical use of sounds by the Kaluli, in hunting and gathering, in assessing diurnal and seasonal change, and in orientation through the thick forest.[48]

The postscript to the second edition of *Sound and Sentiment* is especially interesting, as here Feld describes the reactions of the Kaluli to the first edition of his book, and includes their critique of his work. The Kaluli complained that Feld was preoccupied with exceptional events in their lives - the ceremonial or symbolic events - and paid scant attention to everyday practicalities. They asked why he had included so much material on the sounds of the birds, and not of the frogs, insects and other animals which inhabit their locality and inform their decisions. Feld was criticised for prioritising bird sounds because they embodied the sounds of the dead, whereas other 'voices of the forest' were equally important, they just transmitted different messages. The Kaluli also did not recognise their experiences in Feld's gendered analysis of ceremonial weeping. Whereas Feld had detected an ethnophysical link between women, emotion and irrationality, the Kaluli suggested that it was men who were considered to be the emotional and unpredictable gender, more moody and lacrymose.[49] Feld's response to these criticisms was to direct his attention to the more everyday sounds of Kaluli life, describing his fieldwork as the creation of 'a pool of sensate material'.[50] In his later work Feld describes his study as 'acoustemology', a combination of acoustics and epistemology.[51]

---

[48] Steven Feld, *Sound and Sentiment. Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*, 2nd edn (Philadelphia, 1990), see esp. pp. 33-4, 61-3; Feld also considers the sound of Kaluli drumming in 'Sound as a Symbolic System: The Kaluli Drum' in Charlotte J. Frisbie (ed.), *Explorations in Ethnomusicology: Essays in Honor of David P. McAlleste* (Detroit, 1986), 147-58.
[49] Feld, *Sound and Sentiment,* pp. 239-68.
[50] *ibid.*, p. 265.
[51] Steven Feld, 'Sound Worlds', in Patricia Kruth and Henry Stobart (eds), *Sound. The Darwin College Lectures* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 183-4. Bruce R. Smith also used Feld's research to provide a direction for his work, and engaged especially with Feld's notion of 'acoustemology', see *The Acoustic World*, pp. 47-8.

By studying Feld's work, and the way it has developed, I am not suggesting that early modern English people had a particular affinity with the Kaluli. Indeed, the Kaluli live very different lives, they dwell in thick forest and hunt and gather their food. However, the Kaluli are probably the culture whose use and perception of sounds has been most comprehensively analysed, and Feld's postscript is especially instructive. Another lesson to learn from Feld, bearing in mind that my study spans two centuries, is that so called 'traditional' cultures are not fixed and constant, but change over time. Feld's work provides a conceptual framework for the use of sounds to denote differences in time, space and personality. In communities where clocks and watches are scarce, how do people tell the time, and how do they know when to rise in the morning? Like the Kaluli, some early modern English people used bird sounds to assess time (see Chapter 4). Without the use of a compass and a map, how does one orientate around unfamiliar environments, or navigate unfamiliar waters? The Kaluli use sounds, and so did early modern people (see Chapter 2). The Kaluli liken members of their community to birds, depending on their sounds; noisy children, for example, are likened to 'sosas', which are the nosiest birds heard by the Kaluli. The personality traits of early modern English people could also be compared to the sounds of birds or animals (see Chapter 3). Even the Kaluli notion that you might sound like what you eat would not have been alien to the correspondent who, in 1692, asked the editor of *The Athenian Mercury* whether a child fed with cow's milk would 'loo' like a cow.[52]

Although there are lessons to be learnt from social anthropology, anthropological method is difficult to apply directly to the study of past communities. As historians cannot base their fieldwork on direct contact, they

---

[52] *The Athenian Mercury*, VII, no. 28 (2 July 1692). My thanks to Helen Berry for this reference.

must use material compiled by others, for other purposes.[53] Meaning could therefore be incorrectly attributed. However, if 'ethnographers of the archive' have a methodological advantage over the cultural anthropologists, it is because they are investigating a culture which has already been described by the people who actually lived it. Anthropologists write fieldwork notes about the natives. Historians use notes written by the natives.

While Bruce Smith based his study of early modern England on literature I will be more eclectic. Although sounds are mentioned in almost every type of document, there is no obvious body of sources specifically oriented to the study of sounds.[54] The range of sources which are potentially useful for a study of sounds in early modern England is extensive, and combined with the fact that the research prospects new terrain, I have consulted a vast range of sources. Being omnivorous minimises the bias which might result from basing source selection on modern conceptions of the sense of hearing.

Diaries, autobiographies and travel accounts have been examined most extensively. Roy Porter commented that 'all who have immersed themselves in diaries, novels, and letters will have their ears attuned to the distant sounds of civilized life' and, recognising this, I have made repeated use of personal documents.[55] Diary entries are usually sufficiently detailed to be useful, but not so fulsome as to be unmanageable. The possibility that diarists identified exceptional sounds or circumstances, such as particularly alarming sounds, or especially noisy streets, is not necessarily an obstacle to understanding their sound worlds, as reactions to these unusual sounds might throw normality into relief, and thus reveal underlying sensibilities. These personal accounts might provide something like a

---

[53] James Fernandez, 'Historians Tell Tales: Of Cartesian Cats and Gallic Cockfights', in *Journal of Modern History*, 60 (1988), 113-27, p. 117.
[54] Robert Muchembled made a similar remark about gestures, in 'Gestures under the Ancien Regime in France', in Bremmer and Roodenburg (eds), *Cultural History of Gestures*, p. 132.
[55] Roy Porter, preface to Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant*, p. v.

'natives' point of view' on early modern England. The perceptions of four diarists are detailed regularly throughout the thesis. These are; Ralph Josselin, the vicar of Earl's Colne, Essex, who recorded his daily thoughts and activities between 1644 and 1683; Samuel Pepys, the London based clerk of the acts to the navy board, whose diary spans the years of the 1660s; John Evelyn, one of the earliest members of the Royal Society, who lived in Deptford whilst he kept his diary from the mid- to the late-seventeenth century; and Dudley Ryder, who recorded his life as a student at the Middle Temple between 1715 and 1716.

Autobiographies were written to provide a coherent account of the author's life (or a significant part of that life), composed after reflection and in a unified narrative. The autobiographer's retrospection is fixed at the single point of writing but a diary is composed of multiple (often daily) points of retrospection. As memory is selective, the autobiographer might overlook the mundane realities of life that are elided because of their supposed triviality, and thus references to sounds might be squeezed out. In his study of autobiographies Wayne Shumaker highlights this as a problem for any historian trying to derive a sense of everyday life from an autobiography; '[m]ost autobiographers live in no houses, work in no rooms, sleep in no beds, see nothing of the streets through which they daily pass, are blind to the succession of seasons, never suffer from minor illnesses or irritations'.[56] Consequently, although useful for a study of sounds, autobiographies are not generally as fruitful as diaries.

As perceptions are heightened in unfamiliar environments, accounts written by travellers are especially useful, exposing tacit features of the culture explored. An individual's struggle to adjust to a new environment reveals traits of both their personality and of the host society. Michel de Certeau has demonstrated the

---

[56] Wayne Shumaker, *English Autobiography. Its Emergence, Materials and Form* (Berkeley, 1954), p. 41.

potential of studying accounts which reveal the sights and sounds which delighted, amazed, surprised, frightened and disgusted the traveller.[57] Cultural theorist Paul Voestermans notes that 'when body meets body in the context of different life-styles, different forms of dressing, strange eating habits, unusual smells, strange ways of moving around etc., it can betray itself as a very sensitive organ.'[58] The Scotsman James Boswell, on his second visit to the capital, was 'agreeably confused' by noises, but his companion disagreed, considering London 'just as a place where he was to receive orders from the East India Company'.[59] That Boswell's *London Journal* illustrates his acclimatisation to the metropolis and records his changing perceptions of its sounds, merits an inclusion here in spite of it falling slightly outside the selected time period.

The accounts of foreign travellers are an other important source, revealing nuances of everyday life overlooked by the natives, and these travellers might even be regarded as having an 'ethnographic ear'.[60] However, descriptions of sounds in modern translations need to be treated with circumspection. It is important also to be alert to exaggeration on the part of these observers (or, rather, listeners). When the Venetian chaplain Horatio Busino commented about the multitude of coaches and carts travelling on London's streets, his perception might have been sharpened by the contrast to Venice, where travel by foot and water was more prevalent, and hence his comments might be exaggerated.[61] Too great a reliance on the accounts of foreign travellers might create an imbalance of material towards ceremony and

---

[57] Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York, 1988), pp. 209-43.
[58] Paul Voestermans, 'Alterity/Identity: A Deficient Image of Culture', pp. 219-51 of Raymond Corbey and Joep T. Leerssen (eds), *Alterity, Identity, Image - Selves and Others in Society and Scholarship* (Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 238-40.
[59] *Boswell's London Journal,* p. 51 (19 November 1762).
[60] Peter Burke described some of the travellers to Italy during the early modern period as having an 'ethnographic eye', in *The historical anthropology of early modern Italy. Essays on perception and communication* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 17.
[61] Peter Razzell (ed.), *The journals of two travellers in Elizabethan and early Stuart England. Thomas Platter and Horatio Busino* (London, 1995), p. 155.

too little concern for everyday life. On the basis of his bibliography it appears that Bruce Smith used approximately three foreign travel accounts for each English one, and this might explain his preoccupation with lavish ceremony and courtly pomp.

Diaries, autobiographies and travel accounts give the greatest insight into perception and motivation, but they might only be those of the author and not necessarily representative of a shared cultural experience. As personal documents focus on individual actions and motivations, at the expense of more complex social processes, they need to be situated by reference to other sources. Anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff highlight the degree of care required for such contextualisation, arguing that finding the relationship between 'fragments' and 'fields' poses a great analytic challenge. They wonder how to make intelligible idiosyncratic actions and representations of others, whilst at the same time retaining the 'fragile uniqueness and ambiguity' of the fragments of human experiences. They argue that to do this it is necessary to explore the processes that shape and transform life worlds, and which allow certain things to be said or done.[62]

To help situate the 'fragments' of life encapsulated in the personal documents I have also gathered references from conduct books and other didactic works, early dictionaries, pamphlet literature, the popular press, philosophical essays, works of natural history, religious tracts and sermons, descriptions of England and its 'characters', medical and scientific texts, trade and craft manuals and numerous works of drama, poetry and prose. Portraits and prints of people and street scenes have been inspected for pictorial representations of sounds. A further perspective has been added by examining various official documents: civic ordinances and records; statutes and proclamations; legal reports of cases heard in King's Bench, Chancery and the Old Bailey; the records of various quarter sessions; and churchwardens' presentments and accounts.

---

[62] John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 14-31.

Literature presents the historian with much fertile material. Representations provided by these sources may occasionally be stereotypical or exaggerated, but they still reveal a great deal about the priorities and values of the culture from which they emerged. Poets, dramatists and authors belong to a milieu which is imprinted in their writing; as the philosopher Paul Ricoeur notes, 'the work of imagination does not come out of nowhere.'[63] Works of fiction are neither totally dependable nor totally deceptive as descriptions of the past, what they present to the historian is a possible repertoire of contemporary sounds and plausible reactions to them. The perceptions contained in these literary sources are predominantly those of the author, who was usually an urban adult male.[64] It is necessary to bear this gender imbalance in mind, particularly when the source in question is supposed to reveal the use and perceptions of sounds by women. This inherent problem does not negate the utility of these sources, providing they are used sensitively.[65]

Nuggets of early modern proverbial wisdom are scattered throughout the thesis. Proverbs indicate strategies for dealing with life, and yield insights about sounds, the plight of the deaf, and the utility of hearing. However, as James Obelkevich points out in his study of proverbs, care needs to be taken when using them in order to avoid being too greatly directed by them. Wryly noting that the 'proverb about appearances being deceptive can be applied to proverbs themselves', Obelkevich highlights the shifting, ambiguous and contradictory nature of proverbial wisdom.[66]

---

[63] David Wood (ed.), *Paul Ricouer: Narrative and Interpretation* (London, 1991), 'Life and quest for narrative', p. 25.
[64] Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil. Witchcraft, sexuality and religion in early modern Europe* (London, 1994), p. 11.
[65] E.P. Thompson, 'Anthropology and the discipline of historical context', Review article in *Midland History*, 1 (1972), 41-55, p. 49; Stephen Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse. Essays in Early Modern Culture* (London, 1990), p. 5.
[66] James Obelkevich, 'Proverbs and social history', in Peter Burke and Roy Porter (eds), *The Social History of Language*, Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture, 12 (Cambridge, 1987), 43-72.

The market for conduct books boomed during the period.[67] These works contained normative guidance on behaviour, and the range of subjects tackled included household relationships, the private conduct which should govern marital and filial relations and the protocol surrounding domestic service. Guides to conduct in public settings were also sold and these provide important clues about the structure of public conduct as it influenced, and was influenced by, power relations, society and communication. Some works were directed at particular readers, such as school children, refined ladies and the heirs of landed gentry. Conduct books are an essential source for the discussion of the propriety of body sounds, and the place of sound in etiquette and decorum. These texts indicate the levels and types of sound expected in polite company and in various behavioural settings and situations. Care must be taken to avoid the assumption that they were widely read, endorsed or representative. Other didactic literature which has been particularly informative concerns the problems of urban living; husbandry and gardening; the work of the housewife, the pursuits of hawking and hunting; battle technique; and various crafts and trade practices.

As sensory perceptions can be difficult to describe linguistically, images and other artefacts of material culture can provide alternative avenues for understanding aurality by providing representations of sounds and aural environments. Sounds such as the motion of a bell, a screaming mouth, a whistling labourer and a drum being struck, could be evocatively depicted in art.[68] Considering how artists represent human sounds provides an insight into the nature of sounds and potential responses to them. Yet these sources must be interpreted carefully, as some sounds do not have obvious visual markers. The crudity of many pictorial representations shows the difficulty of transmitting sounds into

---

[67] Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility. Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998), esp. pp. 11-13, 81.
[68] Leppert, *The Sight of Sound*, p. 23.

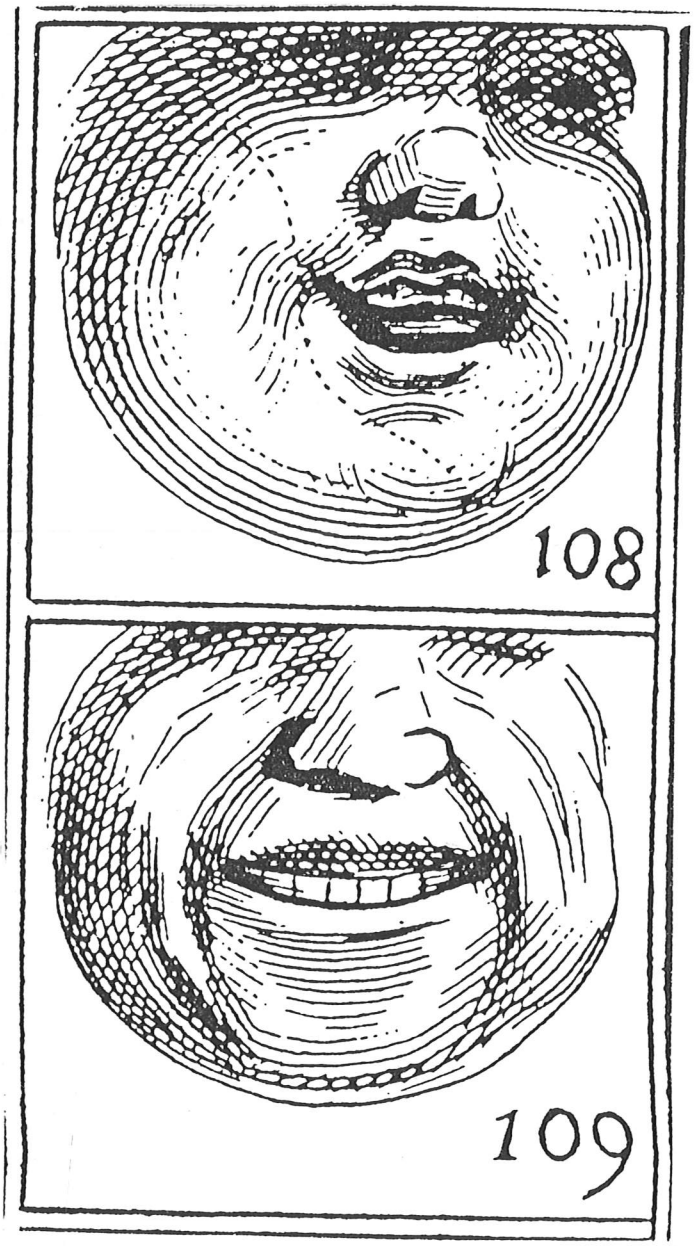


fig. 1. Detail from William Hogarth, *Analysis of Beauty* (1753), plate II.

another medium. William Hogarth commented that the artist could make an expression 'more or less legible', adding the example of 'little narrow chinese eyes' as a suitable addition to a laughing face. He explained also that if an artist illustrates a character with a full laugh he will lose his beauty, 'the expression of excessive laughter, oftener than any other, gives a sensible face a silly or disagreeable look, as if it is apt to form regular lines about the mouth, which sometimes appears like crying'.[69] (see fig. 1)

Official records reveal social and judicial processes which constrained or punished behaviour. In the early modern period there was not total freedom to make any sound, in any place, at any time, and occasionally soundmaking which did not conform to expected norms was presented to regulatory bodies. By examining attempts to regulate sounds and to punish those flouting such regulations it is possible to examine the priorities of early modern English authorities. The nonverbal sounds detailed in criminal records are most frequently those considered to be aggressive, the civic records provide evidence of noise nuisance and the ecclesiastic records indicate profane sounds. Combined they provide a valuable complement to the more personal documents.

Hearing was only one of the senses through which the early modern world was experienced, and sounds were only one means by which early modern people communicated. In 1942 Lucien Febvre tried to rouse historians to explore how sixteenth-century people used their senses, claiming that these were 'open-air men, seeing nature but also feeling, hearing, touching, breathing her through all their senses', and that as a consequence their sense of hearing was highly developed.[70] Now, over half a century later, the body of work concerning the history of the

---

[69] William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty* (1753) facs edn (Menston, 1971), pp. 127-30.
[70] Lucien Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais*, trans. Beatrice Gottlieb (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), pp. 424-5.

senses is steadily growing.[71] In his seminal study of the smells of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France, *The Foul and the Fragrant* (first published in 1982) Corbin not only details olfactory phenomena, but also explores the consequences of smell for society, literature and science. Corbin highlights changes which occurred not only in actual smells, but in the ways these were emphasised or suppressed, and how they were coded. For this work Corbin contrasted abhorrence of 'foul' odours with an appreciation of 'fragrant' scents and traced attempts to purify the public spaces of nineteenth-century France.[72]

To attempt a Corbin-style division is difficult to achieve with sounds. What were the good sounds? Were they beneficial, pleasant, 'sweet' or harmonious? What were the bad sounds? Were they useless, unpleasant, cacophonous and inharmonious? Even if two categories of opposite sound could be formulated, many sounds would fit into both - for example, some sounds might have been noisy but useful, and decisions of categorisation might therefore be crude. The context of a sound might change; bellringing in the day might have been a useful form of signalling, during the night it could have been a noisy nuisance. Such a division would necessitate making assumptions about early modern views, as surviving descriptions of visceral and emotional reactions to sounds do not generally conform to a division of good or bad. Dividing sounds into contrasts also places too much stress on the perception of sounds, at the expense of the motivations to produce them. Additionally, any division of sounds into, for example, harmonious and inharmonious, or pleasant and unpleasant sounds, would

---

[71] See, for example, Josipovici, *Touch*; Annick Le Guerer, *Scent. The Mysterious and Essential Powers of Smell*, trans. Richard Miller (London, 1988); Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity. A Particular History of the Senses* (London, 1993); William F. Bynum and Roy Porter (eds), *Medicine and the Five Senses* (Cambridge, 1993); Piero Camporesi, *The Fear of Hell. Images of Damnation and Salvation in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Lucinda Byatt (Cambridge, 1990), also *The Anatomy of the Senses. Natural Symbols in Medieval and Early Modern Italy*, trans. Allan Cameron (Cambridge, 1994).

[72] Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant*.

suffer from the exclusion of verbal and musical sounds from this study, and consequently tilt the subject matter in favour of inharmonious and unpleasant sounds. This is not to imply that all sweet sounds had a musical or verbal basis, there are, for example, poetic evocations of babbling brooks, and in travel accounts descriptions of sounds like 'gladsome birdsongs', 'plashing fountains' and the 'pretty murmuring noise' of water.[73] There are also accounts of happy celebrations in which the sounds of loud fireworks and bellringing added to the festive ambience.[74]

Unlike Bruce Smith, I will not try to recreate the 'soundscape' of any particular region of early modern England because the suffix 'scape' implies a more comprehensive encapsulation of the sonic experience than is possible given the constraints of early modern source material. Additionally, as my study does not include the words or music of early modern people, sounds which would have been essential features of any soundscape, any evocation would be extremely partial. Rejecting both the soundscaping and the 'foul and fragrant' approaches, I will instead provide an analysis of specific types of sound, categorised according to their functions or by the reactions they engendered, seeking answers to such questions as; why did particular sounds, in particular contexts, intrigue, annoy, upset, depress or excite people? Which sounds triggered action, and which indicated danger? The thesis follows a categorisation based on the ways sounds were used and heard. The six chapters cover the following areas: the use and abuse of the sense of hearing; the use of human nonverbal communication; the deployment, reception and control of sound signals; the use of sounds to create an

---

[73] Clare Williams (ed.), *Thomas Platter's Travels in England 1599* (London, 1937), p. 200 (27 September 1599); Christopher Morris (ed.), *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes* (London, 1947), p. 97. See also *Pepys*, VIII, p. 240 (28 May 1667).

[74] See, for example, Angelo Raine, *York Civic Records VIII*, The Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 119 (Wakefield, 1953), p. 77 - preparations for the Midsummer show in June 1584 included the procurement of gunpowder 'to helpe to sette forthe the showe for the worshipp of this Cyttie.'

aggressive atmosphere, or to seize territory symbolically; and the nuisance of noise. Whilst not always mutually exclusive, these categories are sufficiently self-contained to permit identification of their primary characteristics.

The concern of Chapter 2 is the sense of hearing - how and when it was appreciated or confused, and how it could be sharpened, or dulled or deafened. As early modern communities harboured many people of varying degrees of deafness, their experiences are also discussed here, with a distinction drawn between those born deaf, and those who acquired deafness after they had developed verbal language skills.

The third chapter introduces body sounds, such as belching, farting, giggling and sighing, asking under what conditions did these sounds become meaningful? When did they need to be suppressed? In which situations might they be profitably enhanced? Focusing on the two sounds which were most frequently mentioned in early modern sources - laughing and crying - the chapter explores the various functions of these sounds, and the differences in behaviour between different social and demographic groups. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the deliberate manipulation of sounds for personal ends and the role of sounds in the formation of personalities.

The fourth chapter considers the perception and issue of sound signals - sounds which warned that something was happening or would happen. The chapter starts with a discussion of sounds of the natural world which were thought by some to indicate either future disasters, or to forecast weather. The bulk of the chapter, however, is devoted to signals which were deliberately issued in the public realm in order to convey information, warn of calamities, announce deaths, instruct and gather communities, and how sounds could mark temporal, social and spatial divisions. Chapter 5 extends the discussion of sound signals, exploring the ways

that secular and ecclesiastical authorities sought to control the apparatus of signalling, and considering how successful these attempts were.

Aggressive sounds are the focus of Chapter 6, but 'aggression' is interpreted in broadly. Sounds which had the potential to create a violently charged atmosphere figure here, as do the sounds which accompanied actual violence. Emphasis is given to the way that aggressive sounds needed to be made differently, depending on the status of those to whom they are directed; if directed towards inferiors they might be issued crudely and harshly, when directed towards superiors more care was needed.

Chapter 7 analyses the meaning of noise as nuisance and explores its various contexts, showing how people attempted to manipulate their environment to reduce noise disturbance, through legal means and by altering buildings. From my analysis of a large number of diaries and travel accounts and by deciphering the prints of William Hogarth, I suggest that Londoners and visitors to London became increasingly sensitive to urban noise after the mid-seventeenth century.

Despite the fact that almost every type of historical document can provide indications about the use and perceptions of sounds in early modern England, given the limitations of the material much of the evidence is fragmentary By piecing together these remains I will create a mosaic of the auditory experiences of early modern English people. By conducting this study I do not wish to imply that hearing was the primary means of perception, or that all communication was conducted through sounds, but aim to show how people could and did utilise sounds, and how they could and did perceive them.

CHAPTER 2 - TURNING A DEAF EAR: HEARING AND NOT HEARING

After the Reformation the religious culture of Protestant England placed an increased value upon hearing in relation to the other senses. All the senses had been employed in the Catholic liturgy. The eye regarded the lights, tapers and torches and looked upon stained-glass, images and icons.[1] Many churches were suffused with frankincense, meant to cleanse the air, but also perceptible to the nose.[2] Rosary beads were handled, relics and pax bread were passed around and kissed.[3] Physical contact was made when the congregation were sprinkled with holy water during the service and when the dying were anointed during Extreme Unction.[4] Taste was involved with the ingestion of the holy bread, intended to be the first food taken on a Sunday.[5] Injunctions of 1547 and subsequent legislation and practice removed these activities and in doing so reduced the involvement of senses other than hearing in a religious context.

The sounds which were heard within the churches did not remain the same after the Reformation; gone were the hand bells; gone the sacring bell which signalled when the congregation should gaze up to see the elevation; gone the Latin

---

[1] Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People. Popular Religion and the English Reformation*, (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 22, 48-53; Robert Whiting, *Local Responses to the English Reformation* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 84-9; Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy,* 2nd edn (London, 1945), pp. 616, 620. Dix illustrates the stress placed on sight by the pre-Reformation congregation. See Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c.1580* (New Haven, 1992), pp. 95-107, 451. Tessa Watt's caveat about ignoring the visual remnants left after the Reformation is an important one to bear in mind, however, so as not to overstress this reduction, Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991), esp. p. 137.

[2] E.G. Cuthbert F. Atchley, *A History of the use of Incense in Divine Worship* (London, 1909), p. ix. Entries for frankincense were common in pre-Reformation churchwardens' accounts. See, for example, John Foster Williams (ed.), *The Early Churchwardens' Accounts of Hampshire* (Winchester, 1913), pp. 1, 81, 101-14.

[3] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 125, 450; Whiting, *Blind Devotion*, pp. 70-1; Whiting, *Local Responses to the Reformation*, pp. 66, 81-2; Christopher Marsh, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth-Century England. Holding their Peace* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 32-4.

[4] Marsh, *Popular Religion*, p. 32-4; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 313, 473.

[5] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. 124; Marsh, *Popular Religion,* p. 33-4.

mass, and some of the music of choristers and organists.[6] Nonetheless, the sense of hearing was involved more intensely during the service than it had been previously.[7] In the Anglican church the ability to hear was a paramount skill, necessary to absorb the word of God.[8] The importance of the Word was not a novel feature of the period; the bible taught that 'faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.'[9] Yet, the importance of hearing the Word was now greater, as it could not be compensated or complemented by divine wisdom gathered by the other senses. 'Seeing' was no longer 'believing'; in the post-Reformation church *'Faith sees by the ears'*.[10] Sounds which had previously been invested with power were now the subject of ardent denouncements. Whereas bells had been thought able to chase away devils and thunder storms, their use for such purposes was forbidden in the reformed church.[11] Now the only sounds invested with power were the words of the scripture.

Brathwait called the ear 'an edifying sense' which conveyed 'the fruit of either morall or divine discourse to the imagination ... conferring with judgement,

---

[6] John Edmund Cox (ed.), *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, martyr, 1556*, The Parker Society, 18 (Cambridge, 1846), p. 158; John Stanley Purvis (ed.), *Tudor Parish Documents of the Diocese of York. A selection with introduction and notes* (Cambridge, 1948), p. 4; Whiting, *Local Responses to the Reformation*, p. 3; Marsh, *Popular Religion*, pp. 32-4.

[7] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 97; Whiting, *Blind Devotion*, p. 22.

[8] The Word of God has a verbal basis. Its inclusion here is due to the priority placed upon the sense of hearing by a suggested increase in the religious importance of the 'word' after the Reformation. The purpose is not to explore the verbal elements of the word of God, but the implications of its importance. Roland Barthes, 'Listening', in *The Responsibility of Forms - critical essays on music, art and representation*, trans. R. Howard (Oxford, 1986) p. 250, 'To *listen* is the evangelistic verb par excellence'.

[9] *The Bible. Authorized King James Version* (Oxford, 1997), p. 199 [Rom. 10:17].

[10] Thomas Fuller, *Gnomologia: Adagies and Proverbs; Wise Sentences and Witty Sayings, Ancient and Modern, Foreign and British* (London, 1732), p. 57, no. 1493.

[11] The devil, thought by some to be responsible for thunder, was thought to be repelled by bell-ringing. This was stridently denied by Hugh Latimer and George Gifford, amongst others. See George Elwes Corrie (ed.), *Sermons of Hugh Latimer, sometime Bishop of Worcester, Martyr, 1555*, The Parker Society, 23 (Cambridge, 1844), p. 498; George Gifford, *A Discourse of the subtill Practises of Devilles by Witches and Sorcerers* (London, 1587), D3v. Ringers high in the belfry were at risk of being struck by the lightening and Sir John Lauder refers to this risk, in Donald Crawford (ed.), *Journals of Sir John Lauder, Lord Fountainhall, with his Observations on Public Affairs and other memoranda, 1665-1676* (Edinburgh, 1900), p. 49.

whether that which it hath heard, seeme to deserve approbation'.[12] For both Presbyterian minister Daniel Burgess and preacher William Harrison, correct hearing was essential for understanding and salvation.[13] Burgess argued that the devout must ensure that there are no distractions to hearing the Word of God, and thus people could achieve fruitful or 'dutiful Hearing'.[14] Harrison emphasised the importance of hearing the Word of God when he moralised about the various types of listener and criticised papists for believing that they would be saved by sight. Harrison also asserted that the devil placed obstacles in the way of correct hearing.[15]

One such obstacle might have been an inability to hear the service. Archbishop Grindal instructed ministers to ensure that their congregations could hear them, yet occasionally churches were so filled with shuffling, snoring and muttering that some people were unable to hear the minister's words.[16] After Henry Newcome preached to a large congregation in 1658 he noted in his diary that 'Sundry went away, and could not hear'.[17] The design of some buildings further exacerbated the problem as little attention had been paid to acoustic quality during their design. Travelling through England at the end of the seventeenth century, Celia Fiennes described Salisbury Cathedral as 'so lofty that the Ecco drowns the intelligableness of the voice.'[18] Problems were compounded when the orator failed to raise his voice sufficiently to be heard and Pepys moaned that he

---

[12] Richard Brathwayt, *Essaies upon the Five Senses, with a pithie one upon detraction* (London, 1620), p. 8.
[13] William Harrison, *The Difference of Hearers or an exposition of the parable of the sower. Delivered in Certaine sermons at Hyton in Lancashire* (London, 1614). In his dedicatory Harrison criticises Papists for hoping to be saved by sight alone.
[14] Daniel Burgess, *Rules for hearing the Word of God*, 2nd edn (London, 1693), pp. 3-5, 19.
[15] Harrison, *The Difference of Hearers,* pp. 1-21.
[16] Cited in Purvis (ed.), *Tudor Parish Documents of York*, pp. 125-6.
[17] R. Parkinson, *The Autobiography of Henry Newcome*, The Chetham Society, 26 (Manchester, 1852), p. 93 (10 June 1658); see also *Evelyn*, III, p. 534 (11 July 1669).
[18] Christopher Morris (ed.), *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes* (London, 1947), p. 6; see Pepys' criticisms of the acoustics of the Great Hall in Whitehall, *Pepys*, VII, p. 347 (29 October 1666).

was unable to hear a bishop preaching at Whitehall in May 1664 as he spoke 'too low for me to hear behind the king's closet'.[19] When John Evelyn attended a sermon at Whitehall three years earlier he had faced the same problem, noting that the preacher's voice was 'so low I could heare nothing'. Evelyn also complained that the Bishop of Exeter 'spake so very low, & the crowde so greate, that I could not heare him' and that the minister of St Lawrence's church was inaudible as he 'spake so very low, & was so feeble an old man'.[20] Colds, sore throats and strained voices would have caused problems for preachers, especially those preaching to vast crowds outdoors at St Paul's Cross, as they strove to spread the Word.[21]

Even in ideal conditions some people were thought to be unable to benefit from hearing the minister's words. In the seventeenth century Puritan minister William Gouge listed five sorts of ear which did not hear the Word of God correctly: the 'dull ear' of the drowsy, careless or ignorant person; the 'stopped ear' of the wilfully stubborn (for example, recusants); the 'prejudicial ear' of an evil person; the 'nice' or 'itching ear' which can hear only 'novelties and dainties' and 'looks not so much to the goodness of the meat, as to the sweetness of the sawce' and the 'adulterous ear' which will hear anything except the words which will guide towards the path of righteousness.[22] Hearing alone was insufficient and many understood that God's messages should be effectively absorbed and acted upon.[23] John Evelyn recognised the purpose of a sermon he attended in 1688 as 'directing how we ought to heare', and likewise in 1737 doctor Richard Kay

---

[19] *Pepys*, V, p. 161 (29 May 1664).
[20] *Evelyn*, III, p. 285 (28 April, 1661); IV, p. 7 (29 March 1673); p. 282 (28 May 1682).
[21] *Evelyn*, V, p. 84 - 'The Minister had such a cold as he hardly could be heard' (17 January 1692); Clare Williams (ed.), *Thomas Platter's travels in England 1599* (London, 1937), p. 177 (21 September 1599).
[22] William Gouge, preface to Stephen Egerton, *The boring of the eare, contayning a plaine and profitable discourse by way of dialogue* (London, 1623), sigs A4-A5.
[23] Fuller, *Gnomologia*, p. 57, no. 1493; see, for example, *Evelyn*, IV, p. 355 (9 December 1683).

described a sermon which taught him to 'take heed not only what I hear, but how I hear, and ever bless me not only with the hearing ear, but likewise with the Understanding Heart.'[24] Canon 18 (1603) directed that during divine service the congregation should be 'in quiet attendance to hear, mark and understand that which is read, preached or ministered'.[25] John Evelyn, Margaret Hoby and Elizabeth Delaval all struck a self critical tone in their diaries when they felt they had been insufficiently attentive during religious services. On the evening of 4 May 1600 Margaret Hoby 'did eate som thinge before supper beinge verie emptie, which, of purpos, I use to doe, that I may be the fitter to heare: and then I went to privat praer and medetation'. Evelyn was especially rueful when he admitted to sleeping during the sermon. In the seventeenth century one nonconformist minister asserted that 'Hell was made for Sermon sleepers: torment is the just recompense of sinfull ease' and Puritan minister Stephen Egerton declared mid-service napping to be abusive to God, as 'it is an enemie to necessary hearing, and bad manners to boot.'[26]

The sense of hearing clearly enjoyed an increased importance in salvation after the Reformation, yet in terms of the ability to communicate ideas, by 1560 both the senses of hearing and sight were regarded as particularly valuable, quick and noble.[27] On the whole, vision appears to have been regarded as the superior

---

[24] *Evelyn*, IV, p. 604 (4 November 1688); W. Brockbank and F. Kenworthy (eds), *The Diary of Richard Kay 1716-51 of Baldingstone, nr. Bury. A Lancashire Doctor*, The Chetham Society, 3rd ser., 16 (Manchester, 1968), p. 7 (14 April 1737).
[25] Gerald Bray (ed.), *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, The Church of England Record Series, 6 (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 289.
[26] D. G. Greene (ed.), *The Meditations of Lady Elizabeth Delaval, 1662-1671*, Publications of the Surtees Society, 190 (Durham, 1978), pp, 77, 128; *Evelyn*, IV, pp. 346-7 (21 October 1683); 347 (28 October 1683); Joanna Moody (ed.), *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady. The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599-1605* (Stroud, 1998), p. 80 (4 May 1600), see also p. 48 (31 December 1599), and p. 70 (30 March 1600); John Angier, *An Helpe to Better Hearts for Better Times* (London, 1647), pp. 534-7; Egerton, *Boring of the eare*, p. 41; see also p. 28 for a consideration of other impediments to correct hearing of the word of God, such as 'uncleasnesse of life' with 'either withdraw men altogether from hearing, or else make them heare with a deafe eare and a dead heart'.
[27] Donald M. Lowe, *The History of Bourgeois Perception* (Chicago, 1982), p. 15.

sense for practical purposes amongst early modern writers, with hearing a close second.[28] In 1577 Henry Peacham described sight as 'the most principall & perfect sence' and nearly a century later Edward Philips declared it to be the quickest sense. In 1712 *The Spectator* described sight as 'the Sovereign of the Senses'.[29] One eighteenth-century author asserted that 'we of this country take in more strongly by the eye than by the ear.'[30] Hearing was valued for its role in the gaining of knowledge; poet Richard Brathwait asserted that 'Hearing is the organ of understanding; by it we conceive' and playwright Thomas Tomkis described hearing as 'Lord intelligencer to Psyche her Majesty'.[31] William Holder, fellow of the Royal Society, declared both sight and hearing to be 'the Senses of Learning' as they are the 'most capable of receiving communication of Thoughts and Notions by selected Signes'. Holder also compared the relative merits of these senses: vision, unlike audition, needed light and 'a right Line to the objects'; 'Sound can pass to the Ears, where visual Rayes cannot to the Eye.' Sight can identify a greater variety and number of objects at once and comprehend 'Quiesent objects' which the ear failed to detect. That both hearing and seeing could 'embrace their Objects at greater distance' than the other senses, made them ideal for communication, yet, remarked Holder, it is sight which 'takes in at a greater distance' than hearing.[32]

---

[28] Noel Chomel, *Dictionnaire oeconomique, or the Family Dictionary*, 2 vols (London, 1725), I, s.v. 'Ear'.

[29] Henry Peacham (the Elder), *The Garden of Eloquence, conteyning the figures of Grammer and Rhetorick, from whence maye bee gathered all manner of Flowers, Coulors, Ornaments, exornations, forms, and fashions of speech* (London, 1577), sig. B3v; Edward Phillips *The Mysteries of Love and Eloquence, or, the Arts of Wooing and Complementing* (London, 1658), sig. N3v; *The Spectator*, no. 472 [Steele] 1 September 1712.

[30] 'Edward Search' [Abraham Tucker], *Vocal Sounds* (London, 1773), p. 1.

[31] Brathwayt, *Essaies upon the Five Senses*, p. 6; Thomas Tomkis [?], *Lingua; or the Combat of the Tongue* (London, 1607), p. 6. See also Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1621), p. 34.

[32] William Holder, *Elements of Speech: an Essay of Inquiry into The Natural Production of Letters: with an Appendix Concerning Persons Deaf and Dumb* (London, 1669), pp. 1-3.

Much discussion has focused on historical shifts in a perceived hierarchy of the senses.[33] This hierarchy has been judged by gauging the relative dominance of particular senses in ritual and everyday life, yet it is difficult to determine which sense was considered to be most valuable to people now long dead. Inferences can be made by reading their records, but this knowledge has filtered down through written works or artistic depictions and since both media are visually based they might stress a visual bias of the recorder. Furthermore, certain individuals would have reason to privilege one sense; painters and carpenters might have cherished their sense of sight, musicians might have feared losing their sense of hearing.[34] Francis Grose's 'On the comparative state of the Deaf and Blind' provides a late-eighteenth century view of the disabilities of deafness and blindness. Grose qualifies his statement that a deaf man seems more melancholic with a subtle observation that a deaf man would feel more isolated in company than a blind man, while a blind man would feel more isolated when alone than a deaf man. 'Perhaps', he opined 'blindness may be most tolerable to an illiterate man, and deafness to a learned one.'[35]

In this chapter I will consider the various ways in which people living between 1560 and 1760 regarded their sense of hearing. Attention will be paid to the ways that people described their sense of hearing, how and when they thought about it, and how much they valued it. I will consider the views of natural

---

[33] Lucien Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais*, trans. Beatrice Gottlieb (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), pp. 424-5, 432-6; Lowe, *The History of Bourgeois Perception*, pp. 7, 24; D.R. Woolf, 'Speech, Text, and Time: the Sense of Hearing and the Sense of the Past in Renaissance England', *Albion*, 18 (1986), 159-94. Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes. The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 21-82.

[34] For a consideration of this problem see David Chidester, *Word and Light. Seeing, Hearing and Religious Discourse* (Urbana, Ill., 1992), p. x. Chidester considers conclusions about the relative importance of the senses to be fruitless, and argues that they reveal only the bias of the analyst. Expression of a preferred sense 'tells us nothing about seeing and hearing', but only that there is disagreement. See also Jonathan Rée, *I See a Voice. A Philosophical History of Language, Deafness and the Senses* (London, 1999).

[35] Francis Grose, 'On the comparative state of the deaf and blind' in *The Olio: Being a Collection of Essays etc.* (posth., London, 1792), p. 258.

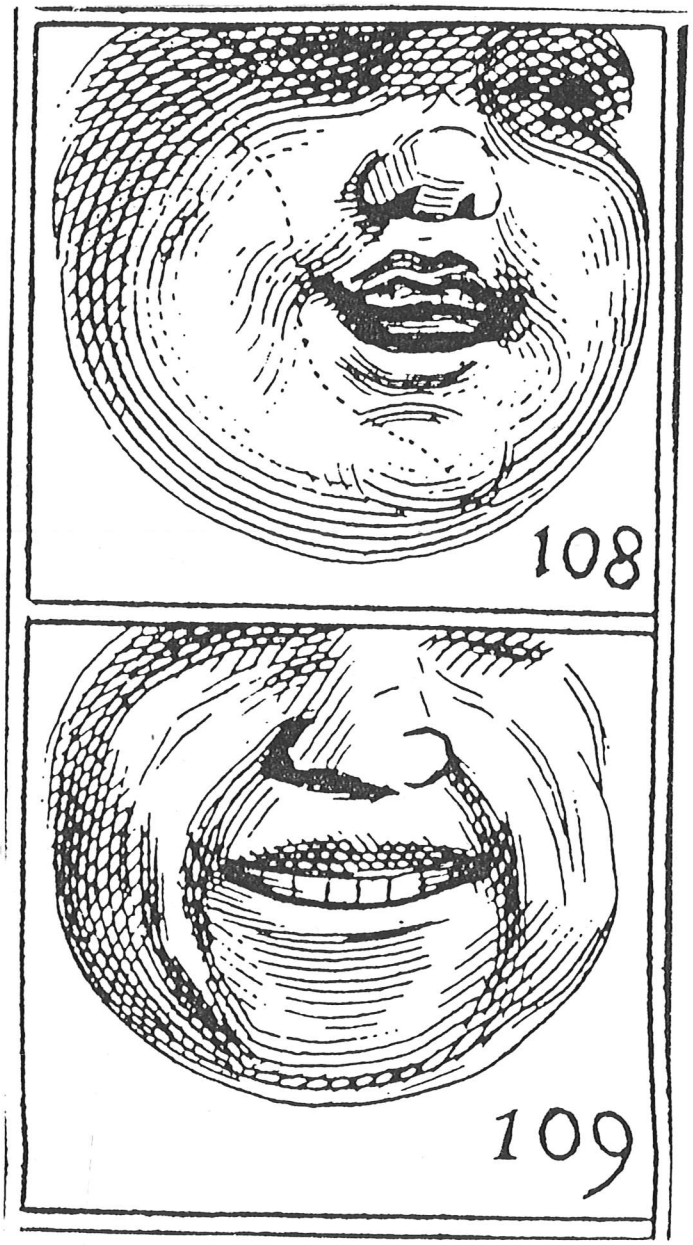


fig. 1. Detail from William Hogarth, *Analysis of Beauty* (1753), plate II.

senses is steadily growing.[71] In his seminal study of the smells of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France, *The Foul and the Fragrant* (first published in 1982) Corbin not only details olfactory phenomena, but also explores the consequences of smell for society, literature and science. Corbin highlights changes which occurred not only in actual smells, but in the ways these were emphasised or suppressed, and how they were coded. For this work Corbin contrasted abhorrence of 'foul' odours with an appreciation of 'fragrant' scents and traced attempts to purify the public spaces of nineteenth-century France.[72]

To attempt a Corbin-style division is difficult to achieve with sounds. What were the good sounds? Were they beneficial, pleasant, 'sweet' or harmonious? What were the bad sounds? Were they useless, unpleasant, cacophonous and inharmonious? Even if two categories of opposite sound could be formulated, many sounds would fit into both - for example, some sounds might have been noisy but useful, and decisions of categorisation might therefore be crude. The context of a sound might change; bellringing in the day might have been a useful form of signalling, during the night it could have been a noisy nuisance. Such a division would necessitate making assumptions about early modern views, as surviving descriptions of visceral and emotional reactions to sounds do not generally conform to a division of good or bad. Dividing sounds into contrasts also places too much stress on the perception of sounds, at the expense of the motivations to produce them. Additionally, any division of sounds into, for example, harmonious and inharmonious, or pleasant and unpleasant sounds, would

---

[71] See, for example, Josipovici, *Touch*; Annick Le Guerer, *Scent. The Mysterious and Essential Powers of Smell*, trans. Richard Miller (London, 1988); Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity. A Particular History of the Senses* (London, 1993); William F. Bynum and Roy Porter (eds), *Medicine and the Five Senses* (Cambridge, 1993); Piero Camporesi, *The Fear of Hell. Images of Damnation and Salvation in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Lucinda Byatt (Cambridge, 1990), also *The Anatomy of the Senses. Natural Symbols in Medieval and Early Modern Italy*, trans. Allan Cameron (Cambridge, 1994).

[72] Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant*.

suffer from the exclusion of verbal and musical sounds from this study, and consequently tilt the subject matter in favour of inharmonious and unpleasant sounds. This is not to imply that all sweet sounds had a musical or verbal basis, there are, for example, poetic evocations of babbling brooks, and in travel accounts descriptions of sounds like 'gladsome birdsongs', 'plashing fountains' and the 'pretty murmuring noise' of water.[73] There are also accounts of happy celebrations in which the sounds of loud fireworks and bellringing added to the festive ambience.[74]

Unlike Bruce Smith, I will not try to recreate the 'soundscape' of any particular region of early modern England because the suffix 'scape' implies a more comprehensive encapsulation of the sonic experience than is possible given the constraints of early modern source material. Additionally, as my study does not include the words or music of early modern people, sounds which would have been essential features of any soundscape, any evocation would be extremely partial. Rejecting both the soundscaping and the 'foul and fragrant' approaches, I will instead provide an analysis of specific types of sound, categorised according to their functions or by the reactions they engendered, seeking answers to such questions as; why did particular sounds, in particular contexts, intrigue, annoy, upset, depress or excite people? Which sounds triggered action, and which indicated danger? The thesis follows a categorisation based on the ways sounds were used and heard. The six chapters cover the following areas: the use and abuse of the sense of hearing; the use of human nonverbal communication; the deployment, reception and control of sound signals; the use of sounds to create an

---

[73] Clare Williams (ed.), *Thomas Platter's Travels in England 1599* (London, 1937), p. 200 (27 September 1599); Christopher Morris (ed.), *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes* (London, 1947), p. 97. See also *Pepys*, VIII, p. 240 (28 May 1667).

[74] See, for example, Angelo Raine, *York Civic Records VIII*, The Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 119 (Wakefield, 1953), p. 77 - preparations for the Midsummer show in June 1584 included the procurement of gunpowder 'to helpe to sette forthe the showe for the worshipp of this Cyttie.'

aggressive atmosphere, or to seize territory symbolically; and the nuisance of noise. Whilst not always mutually exclusive, these categories are sufficiently self-contained to permit identification of their primary characteristics.

The concern of Chapter 2 is the sense of hearing - how and when it was appreciated or confused, and how it could be sharpened, or dulled or deafened. As early modern communities harboured many people of varying degrees of deafness, their experiences are also discussed here, with a distinction drawn between those born deaf, and those who acquired deafness after they had developed verbal language skills.

The third chapter introduces body sounds, such as belching, farting, giggling and sighing, asking under what conditions did these sounds become meaningful? When did they need to be suppressed? In which situations might they be profitably enhanced? Focusing on the two sounds which were most frequently mentioned in early modern sources - laughing and crying - the chapter explores the various functions of these sounds, and the differences in behaviour between different social and demographic groups. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the deliberate manipulation of sounds for personal ends and the role of sounds in the formation of personalities.

The fourth chapter considers the perception and issue of sound signals - sounds which warned that something was happening or would happen. The chapter starts with a discussion of sounds of the natural world which were thought by some to indicate either future disasters, or to forecast weather. The bulk of the chapter, however, is devoted to signals which were deliberately issued in the public realm in order to convey information, warn of calamities, announce deaths, instruct and gather communities, and how sounds could mark temporal, social and spatial divisions. Chapter 5 extends the discussion of sound signals, exploring the ways

that secular and ecclesiastical authorities sought to control the apparatus of signalling, and considering how successful these attempts were.

Aggressive sounds are the focus of Chapter 6, but 'aggression' is interpreted in broadly. Sounds which had the potential to create a violently charged atmosphere figure here, as do the sounds which accompanied actual violence. Emphasis is given to the way that aggressive sounds needed to be made differently, depending on the status of those to whom they are directed; if directed towards inferiors they might be issued crudely and harshly, when directed towards superiors more care was needed.

Chapter 7 analyses the meaning of noise as nuisance and explores its various contexts, showing how people attempted to manipulate their environment to reduce noise disturbance, through legal means and by altering buildings. From my analysis of a large number of diaries and travel accounts and by deciphering the prints of William Hogarth, I suggest that Londoners and visitors to London became increasingly sensitive to urban noise after the mid-seventeenth century.

Despite the fact that almost every type of historical document can provide indications about the use and perceptions of sounds in early modern England, given the limitations of the material much of the evidence is fragmentary By piecing together these remains I will create a mosaic of the auditory experiences of early modern English people. By conducting this study I do not wish to imply that hearing was the primary means of perception, or that all communication was conducted through sounds, but aim to show how people could and did utilise sounds, and how they could and did perceive them.

that secular and ecclesiastical authorities sought to control the apparatus of signalling, and considering how successful these attempts were.

Aggressive sounds are the focus of Chapter 6, but 'aggression' is interpreted in broadly. Sounds which had the potential to create a violently charged atmosphere figure here, as do the sounds which accompanied actual violence. Emphasis is given to the way that aggressive sounds needed to be made differently, depending on the status of those to whom they are directed; if directed towards inferiors they might be issued crudely and harshly, when directed towards superiors more care was needed.

Chapter 7 analyses the meaning of noise as nuisance and explores its various contexts, showing how people attempted to manipulate their environment to reduce noise disturbance, through legal means and by altering buildings. From my analysis of a large number of diaries and travel accounts and by deciphering the prints of William Hogarth, I suggest that Londoners and visitors to London became increasingly sensitive to urban noise after the mid-seventeenth century.

Despite the fact that almost every type of historical document can provide indications about the use and perceptions of sounds in early modern England, given the limitations of the material much of the evidence is fragmentary By piecing together these remains I will create a mosaic of the auditory experiences of early modern English people. By conducting this study I do not wish to imply that hearing was the primary means of perception, or that all communication was conducted through sounds, but aim to show how people could and did utilise sounds, and how they could and did perceive them.

CHAPTER 2 - TURNING A DEAF EAR: HEARING AND NOT HEARING

After the Reformation the religious culture of Protestant England placed an increased value upon hearing in relation to the other senses. All the senses had been employed in the Catholic liturgy. The eye regarded the lights, tapers and torches and looked upon stained-glass, images and icons.[1] Many churches were suffused with frankincense, meant to cleanse the air, but also perceptible to the nose.[2] Rosary beads were handled, relics and pax bread were passed around and kissed.[3] Physical contact was made when the congregation were sprinkled with holy water during the service and when the dying were anointed during Extreme Unction.[4] Taste was involved with the ingestion of the holy bread, intended to be the first food taken on a Sunday.[5] Injunctions of 1547 and subsequent legislation and practice removed these activities and in doing so reduced the involvement of senses other than hearing in a religious context.

The sounds which were heard within the churches did not remain the same after the Reformation; gone were the hand bells; gone the sacring bell which signalled when the congregation should gaze up to see the elevation; gone the Latin

---

[1] Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People. Popular Religion and the English Reformation*, (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 22, 48-53; Robert Whiting, *Local Responses to the English Reformation* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 84-9; Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy,* 2nd edn (London, 1945), pp. 616, 620. Dix illustrates the stress placed on sight by the pre-Reformation congregation. See Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c.1580* (New Haven, 1992), pp. 95-107, 451. Tessa Watt's caveat about ignoring the visual remnants left after the Reformation is an important one to bear in mind, however, so as not to overstress this reduction, Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991), esp. p. 137.

[2] E.G. Cuthbert F. Atchley, *A History of the use of Incense in Divine Worship* (London, 1909), p. ix. Entries for frankincense were common in pre-Reformation churchwardens' accounts. See, for example, John Foster Williams (ed.), *The Early Churchwardens' Accounts of Hampshire* (Winchester, 1913), pp. 1, 81, 101-14.

[3] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 125, 450; Whiting, *Blind Devotion*, pp. 70-1; Whiting, *Local Responses to the Reformation*, pp. 66, 81-2; Christopher Marsh, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth-Century England. Holding their Peace* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 32-4.

[4] Marsh, *Popular Religion*, p. 32-4; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 313, 473.

[5] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. 124; Marsh, *Popular Religion,* p. 33-4.

mass, and some of the music of choristers and organists.[6] Nonetheless, the sense of hearing was involved more intensely during the service than it had been previously.[7] In the Anglican church the ability to hear was a paramount skill, necessary to absorb the word of God.[8] The importance of the Word was not a novel feature of the period; the bible taught that 'faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.'[9] Yet, the importance of hearing the Word was now greater, as it could not be compensated or complemented by divine wisdom gathered by the other senses. 'Seeing' was no longer 'believing'; in the post-Reformation church *'Faith sees by the ears'*.[10] Sounds which had previously been invested with power were now the subject of ardent denouncements. Whereas bells had been thought able to chase away devils and thunder storms, their use for such purposes was forbidden in the reformed church.[11] Now the only sounds invested with power were the words of the scripture.

Brathwait called the ear 'an edifying sense' which conveyed 'the fruit of either morall or divine discourse to the imagination ... conferring with judgement,

---

[6] John Edmund Cox (ed.), *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, martyr, 1556*, The Parker Society, 18 (Cambridge, 1846), p. 158; John Stanley Purvis (ed.), *Tudor Parish Documents of the Diocese of York. A selection with introduction and notes* (Cambridge, 1948), p. 4; Whiting, *Local Responses to the Reformation*, p. 3; Marsh, *Popular Religion*, pp. 32-4.

[7] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 97; Whiting, *Blind Devotion*, p. 22.

[8] The Word of God has a verbal basis. Its inclusion here is due to the priority placed upon the sense of hearing by a suggested increase in the religious importance of the 'word' after the Reformation. The purpose is not to explore the verbal elements of the word of God, but the implications of its importance. Roland Barthes, 'Listening', in *The Responsibility of Forms - critical essays on music, art and representation*, trans. R. Howard (Oxford, 1986) p. 250, 'To *listen* is the evangelistic verb par excellence'.

[9] *The Bible. Authorized King James Version* (Oxford, 1997), p. 199 [Rom. 10:17].

[10] Thomas Fuller, *Gnomologia: Adagies and Proverbs; Wise Sentences and Witty Sayings, Ancient and Modern, Foreign and British* (London, 1732), p. 57, no. 1493.

[11] The devil, thought by some to be responsible for thunder, was thought to be repelled by bell-ringing. This was stridently denied by Hugh Latimer and George Gifford, amongst others. See George Elwes Corrie (ed.), *Sermons of Hugh Latimer, sometime Bishop of Worcester, Martyr, 1555*, The Parker Society, 23 (Cambridge, 1844), p. 498; George Gifford, *A Discourse of the subtill Practises of Devilles by Witches and Sorcerers* (London, 1587), D3v. Ringers high in the belfry were at risk of being struck by the lightening and Sir John Lauder refers to this risk, in Donald Crawford (ed.), *Journals of Sir John Lauder, Lord Fountainhall, with his Observations on Public Affairs and other memoranda, 1665-1676* (Edinburgh, 1900), p. 49.

suffer from the exclusion of verbal and musical sounds from this study, and consequently tilt the subject matter in favour of inharmonious and unpleasant sounds. This is not to imply that all sweet sounds had a musical or verbal basis, there are, for example, poetic evocations of babbling brooks, and in travel accounts descriptions of sounds like 'gladsome birdsongs', 'plashing fountains' and the 'pretty murmuring noise' of water.[73] There are also accounts of happy celebrations in which the sounds of loud fireworks and bellringing added to the festive ambience.[74]

Unlike Bruce Smith, I will not try to recreate the 'soundscape' of any particular region of early modern England because the suffix 'scape' implies a more comprehensive encapsulation of the sonic experience than is possible given the constraints of early modern source material. Additionally, as my study does not include the words or music of early modern people, sounds which would have been essential features of any soundscape, any evocation would be extremely partial. Rejecting both the soundscaping and the 'foul and fragrant' approaches, I will instead provide an analysis of specific types of sound, categorised according to their functions or by the reactions they engendered, seeking answers to such questions as; why did particular sounds, in particular contexts, intrigue, annoy, upset, depress or excite people? Which sounds triggered action, and which indicated danger? The thesis follows a categorisation based on the ways sounds were used and heard. The six chapters cover the following areas: the use and abuse of the sense of hearing; the use of human nonverbal communication; the deployment, reception and control of sound signals; the use of sounds to create an

---

[73] Clare Williams (ed.), *Thomas Platter's Travels in England 1599* (London, 1937), p. 200 (27 September 1599); Christopher Morris (ed.), *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes* (London, 1947), p. 97. See also *Pepys*, VIII, p. 240 (28 May 1667).

[74] See, for example, Angelo Raine, *York Civic Records VIII*, The Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 119 (Wakefield, 1953), p. 77 - preparations for the Midsummer show in June 1584 included the procurement of gunpowder 'to helpe to sette forthe the showe for the worshipp of this Cyttie.'

aggressive atmosphere, or to seize territory symbolically; and the nuisance of noise. Whilst not always mutually exclusive, these categories are sufficiently self-contained to permit identification of their primary characteristics.

The concern of Chapter 2 is the sense of hearing - how and when it was appreciated or confused, and how it could be sharpened, or dulled or deafened. As early modern communities harboured many people of varying degrees of deafness, their experiences are also discussed here, with a distinction drawn between those born deaf, and those who acquired deafness after they had developed verbal language skills.

The third chapter introduces body sounds, such as belching, farting, giggling and sighing, asking under what conditions did these sounds become meaningful? When did they need to be suppressed? In which situations might they be profitably enhanced? Focusing on the two sounds which were most frequently mentioned in early modern sources - laughing and crying - the chapter explores the various functions of these sounds, and the differences in behaviour between different social and demographic groups. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the deliberate manipulation of sounds for personal ends and the role of sounds in the formation of personalities.

The fourth chapter considers the perception and issue of sound signals - sounds which warned that something was happening or would happen. The chapter starts with a discussion of sounds of the natural world which were thought by some to indicate either future disasters, or to forecast weather. The bulk of the chapter, however, is devoted to signals which were deliberately issued in the public realm in order to convey information, warn of calamities, announce deaths, instruct and gather communities, and how sounds could mark temporal, social and spatial divisions. Chapter 5 extends the discussion of sound signals, exploring the ways

that secular and ecclesiastical authorities sought to control the apparatus of signalling, and considering how successful these attempts were.

Aggressive sounds are the focus of Chapter 6, but 'aggression' is interpreted in broadly. Sounds which had the potential to create a violently charged atmosphere figure here, as do the sounds which accompanied actual violence. Emphasis is given to the way that aggressive sounds needed to be made differently, depending on the status of those to whom they are directed; if directed towards inferiors they might be issued crudely and harshly, when directed towards superiors more care was needed.

Chapter 7 analyses the meaning of noise as nuisance and explores its various contexts, showing how people attempted to manipulate their environment to reduce noise disturbance, through legal means and by altering buildings. From my analysis of a large number of diaries and travel accounts and by deciphering the prints of William Hogarth, I suggest that Londoners and visitors to London became increasingly sensitive to urban noise after the mid-seventeenth century.

Despite the fact that almost every type of historical document can provide indications about the use and perceptions of sounds in early modern England, given the limitations of the material much of the evidence is fragmentary By piecing together these remains I will create a mosaic of the auditory experiences of early modern English people. By conducting this study I do not wish to imply that hearing was the primary means of perception, or that all communication was conducted through sounds, but aim to show how people could and did utilise sounds, and how they could and did perceive them.

CHAPTER 2 - TURNING A DEAF EAR: HEARING AND NOT HEARING

After the Reformation the religious culture of Protestant England placed an increased value upon hearing in relation to the other senses. All the senses had been employed in the Catholic liturgy. The eye regarded the lights, tapers and torches and looked upon stained-glass, images and icons.[1] Many churches were suffused with frankincense, meant to cleanse the air, but also perceptible to the nose.[2] Rosary beads were handled, relics and pax bread were passed around and kissed.[3] Physical contact was made when the congregation were sprinkled with holy water during the service and when the dying were anointed during Extreme Unction.[4] Taste was involved with the ingestion of the holy bread, intended to be the first food taken on a Sunday.[5] Injunctions of 1547 and subsequent legislation and practice removed these activities and in doing so reduced the involvement of senses other than hearing in a religious context.

The sounds which were heard within the churches did not remain the same after the Reformation; gone were the hand bells; gone the sacring bell which signalled when the congregation should gaze up to see the elevation; gone the Latin

---

[1] Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People. Popular Religion and the English Reformation*, (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 22, 48-53; Robert Whiting, *Local Responses to the English Reformation* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 84-9; Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy,* 2nd edn (London, 1945), pp. 616, 620. Dix illustrates the stress placed on sight by the pre-Reformation congregation. See Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c.1580* (New Haven, 1992), pp. 95-107, 451. Tessa Watt's caveat about ignoring the visual remnants left after the Reformation is an important one to bear in mind, however, so as not to overstress this reduction, Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991), esp. p. 137.

[2] E.G. Cuthbert F. Atchley, *A History of the use of Incense in Divine Worship* (London, 1909), p. ix. Entries for frankincense were common in pre-Reformation churchwardens' accounts. See, for example, John Foster Williams (ed.), *The Early Churchwardens' Accounts of Hampshire* (Winchester, 1913), pp. 1, 81, 101-14.

[3] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 125, 450; Whiting, *Blind Devotion*, pp. 70-1; Whiting, *Local Responses to the Reformation*, pp. 66, 81-2; Christopher Marsh, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth-Century England. Holding their Peace* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 32-4.

[4] Marsh, *Popular Religion*, p. 32-4; Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, pp. 313, 473.

[5] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. 124; Marsh, *Popular Religion,* p. 33-4.

mass, and some of the music of choristers and organists.[6] Nonetheless, the sense of hearing was involved more intensely during the service than it had been previously.[7] In the Anglican church the ability to hear was a paramount skill, necessary to absorb the word of God.[8] The importance of the Word was not a novel feature of the period; the bible taught that 'faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.'[9] Yet, the importance of hearing the Word was now greater, as it could not be compensated or complemented by divine wisdom gathered by the other senses. 'Seeing' was no longer 'believing'; in the post-Reformation church *'Faith sees by the ears'*.[10] Sounds which had previously been invested with power were now the subject of ardent denouncements. Whereas bells had been thought able to chase away devils and thunder storms, their use for such purposes was forbidden in the reformed church.[11] Now the only sounds invested with power were the words of the scripture.

Brathwait called the ear 'an edifying sense' which conveyed 'the fruit of either morall or divine discourse to the imagination ... conferring with judgement,

---

[6] John Edmund Cox (ed.), *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, martyr, 1556*, The Parker Society, 18 (Cambridge, 1846), p. 158; John Stanley Purvis (ed.), *Tudor Parish Documents of the Diocese of York. A selection with introduction and notes* (Cambridge, 1948), p. 4; Whiting, *Local Responses to the Reformation*, p. 3; Marsh, *Popular Religion*, pp. 32-4.

[7] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 97; Whiting, *Blind Devotion*, p. 22.

[8] The Word of God has a verbal basis. Its inclusion here is due to the priority placed upon the sense of hearing by a suggested increase in the religious importance of the 'word' after the Reformation. The purpose is not to explore the verbal elements of the word of God, but the implications of its importance. Roland Barthes, 'Listening', in *The Responsibility of Forms - critical essays on music, art and representation*, trans. R. Howard (Oxford, 1986) p. 250, 'To *listen* is the evangelistic verb par excellence'.

[9] *The Bible. Authorized King James Version* (Oxford, 1997), p. 199 [Rom. 10:17].

[10] Thomas Fuller, *Gnomologia: Adagies and Proverbs; Wise Sentences and Witty Sayings, Ancient and Modern, Foreign and British* (London, 1732), p. 57, no. 1493.

[11] The devil, thought by some to be responsible for thunder, was thought to be repelled by bell-ringing. This was stridently denied by Hugh Latimer and George Gifford, amongst others. See George Elwes Corrie (ed.), *Sermons of Hugh Latimer, sometime Bishop of Worcester, Martyr, 1555*, The Parker Society, 23 (Cambridge, 1844), p. 498; George Gifford, *A Discourse of the subtill Practises of Devilles by Witches and Sorcerers* (London, 1587), D3v. Ringers high in the belfry were at risk of being struck by the lightening and Sir John Lauder refers to this risk, in Donald Crawford (ed.), *Journals of Sir John Lauder, Lord Fountainhall, with his Observations on Public Affairs and other memoranda, 1665-1676* (Edinburgh, 1900), p. 49.

whether that which it hath heard, seeme to deserve approbation'.[12] For both Presbyterian minister Daniel Burgess and preacher William Harrison, correct hearing was essential for understanding and salvation.[13] Burgess argued that the devout must ensure that there are no distractions to hearing the Word of God, and thus people could achieve fruitful or 'dutiful Hearing'.[14] Harrison emphasised the importance of hearing the Word of God when he moralised about the various types of listener and criticised papists for believing that they would be saved by sight. Harrison also asserted that the devil placed obstacles in the way of correct hearing.[15]

One such obstacle might have been an inability to hear the service. Archbishop Grindal instructed ministers to ensure that their congregations could hear them, yet occasionally churches were so filled with shuffling, snoring and muttering that some people were unable to hear the minister's words.[16] After Henry Newcome preached to a large congregation in 1658 he noted in his diary that 'Sundry went away, and could not hear'.[17] The design of some buildings further exacerbated the problem as little attention had been paid to acoustic quality during their design. Travelling through England at the end of the seventeenth century, Celia Fiennes described Salisbury Cathedral as 'so lofty that the Ecco drowns the intelligableness of the voice.'[18] Problems were compounded when the orator failed to raise his voice sufficiently to be heard and Pepys moaned that he

---

[12] Richard Brathwayt, *Essaies upon the Five Senses, with a pithie one upon detraction* (London, 1620), p. 8.
[13] William Harrison, *The Difference of Hearers or an exposition of the parable of the sower. Delivered in Certaine sermons at Hyton in Lancashire* (London, 1614). In his dedicatory Harrison criticises Papists for hoping to be saved by sight alone.
[14] Daniel Burgess, *Rules for hearing the Word of God*, 2nd edn (London, 1693), pp. 3-5, 19.
[15] Harrison, *The Difference of Hearers,* pp. 1-21.
[16] Cited in Purvis (ed.), *Tudor Parish Documents of York*, pp. 125-6.
[17] R. Parkinson, *The Autobiography of Henry Newcome*, The Chetham Society, 26 (Manchester, 1852), p. 93 (10 June 1658); see also *Evelyn*, III, p. 534 (11 July 1669).
[18] Christopher Morris (ed.), *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes* (London, 1947), p. 6; see Pepys' criticisms of the acoustics of the Great Hall in Whitehall, *Pepys*, VII, p. 347 (29 October 1666).

was unable to hear a bishop preaching at Whitehall in May 1664 as he spoke 'too low for me to hear behind the king's closet'.[19] When John Evelyn attended a sermon at Whitehall three years earlier he had faced the same problem, noting that the preacher's voice was 'so low I could heare nothing'. Evelyn also complained that the Bishop of Exeter 'spake so very low, & the crowde so greate, that I could not heare him' and that the minister of St Lawrence's church was inaudible as he 'spake so very low, & was so feeble an old man'.[20] Colds, sore throats and strained voices would have caused problems for preachers, especially those preaching to vast crowds outdoors at St Paul's Cross, as they strove to spread the Word.[21]

Even in ideal conditions some people were thought to be unable to benefit from hearing the minister's words. In the seventeenth century Puritan minister William Gouge listed five sorts of ear which did not hear the Word of God correctly: the 'dull ear' of the drowsy, careless or ignorant person; the 'stopped ear' of the wilfully stubborn (for example, recusants); the 'prejudicial ear' of an evil person; the 'nice' or 'itching ear' which can hear only 'novelties and dainties' and 'looks not so much to the goodness of the meat, as to the sweetness of the sawce' and the 'adulterous ear' which will hear anything except the words which will guide towards the path of righteousness.[22] Hearing alone was insufficient and many understood that God's messages should be effectively absorbed and acted upon.[23] John Evelyn recognised the purpose of a sermon he attended in 1688 as 'directing how we ought to heare', and likewise in 1737 doctor Richard Kay

---

[19] *Pepys*, V, p. 161 (29 May 1664).
[20] *Evelyn*, III, p. 285 (28 April, 1661); IV, p. 7 (29 March 1673); p. 282 (28 May 1682).
[21] *Evelyn*, V, p. 84 - 'The Minister had such a cold as he hardly could be heard' (17 January 1692); Clare Williams (ed.), *Thomas Platter's travels in England 1599* (London, 1937), p. 177 (21 September 1599).
[22] William Gouge, preface to Stephen Egerton, *The boring of the eare, contayning a plaine and profitable discourse by way of dialogue* (London, 1623), sigs A4-A5.
[23] Fuller, *Gnomologia*, p. 57, no. 1493; see, for example, *Evelyn*, IV, p. 355 (9 December 1683).

described a sermon which taught him to 'take heed not only what I hear, but how I hear, and ever bless me not only with the hearing ear, but likewise with the Understanding Heart.'[24] Canon 18 (1603) directed that during divine service the congregation should be 'in quiet attendance to hear, mark and understand that which is read, preached or ministered'.[25] John Evelyn, Margaret Hoby and Elizabeth Delaval all struck a self critical tone in their diaries when they felt they had been insufficiently attentive during religious services. On the evening of 4 May 1600 Margaret Hoby 'did eate som thinge before supper beinge verie emptie, which, of purpos, I use to doe, that I may be the fitter to heare: and then I went to privat praer and medetation'. Evelyn was especially rueful when he admitted to sleeping during the sermon. In the seventeenth century one nonconformist minister asserted that 'Hell was made for Sermon sleepers: torment is the just recompense of sinfull ease' and Puritan minister Stephen Egerton declared mid-service napping to be abusive to God, as 'it is an enemie to necessary hearing, and bad manners to boot.'[26]

The sense of hearing clearly enjoyed an increased importance in salvation after the Reformation, yet in terms of the ability to communicate ideas, by 1560 both the senses of hearing and sight were regarded as particularly valuable, quick and noble.[27] On the whole, vision appears to have been regarded as the superior

---

[24] *Evelyn*, IV, p. 604 (4 November 1688); W. Brockbank and F. Kenworthy (eds), *The Diary of Richard Kay 1716-51 of Baldingstone, nr. Bury. A Lancashire Doctor*, The Chetham Society, 3rd ser., 16 (Manchester, 1968), p. 7 (14 April 1737).
[25] Gerald Bray (ed.), *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, The Church of England Record Series, 6 (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 289.
[26] D. G. Greene (ed.), *The Meditations of Lady Elizabeth Delaval, 1662-1671*, Publications of the Surtees Society, 190 (Durham, 1978), pp, 77, 128; *Evelyn*, IV, pp. 346-7 (21 October 1683); 347 (28 October 1683); Joanna Moody (ed.), *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady. The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599-1605* (Stroud, 1998), p. 80 (4 May 1600), see also p. 48 (31 December 1599), and p. 70 (30 March 1600); John Angier, *An Helpe to Better Hearts for Better Times* (London, 1647), pp. 534-7; Egerton, *Boring of the eare*, p. 41; see also p. 28 for a consideration of other impediments to correct hearing of the word of God, such as 'uncleasnesse of life' with 'either withdraw men altogether from hearing, or else make them heare with a deafe eare and a dead heart'.
[27] Donald M. Lowe, *The History of Bourgeois Perception* (Chicago, 1982), p. 15.

sense for practical purposes amongst early modern writers, with hearing a close second.[28] In 1577 Henry Peacham described sight as 'the most principall & perfect sence' and nearly a century later Edward Philips declared it to be the quickest sense. In 1712 *The Spectator* described sight as 'the Sovereign of the Senses'.[29] One eighteenth-century author asserted that 'we of this country take in more strongly by the eye than by the ear.'[30] Hearing was valued for its role in the gaining of knowledge; poet Richard Brathwait asserted that 'Hearing is the organ of understanding; by it we conceive' and playwright Thomas Tomkis described hearing as 'Lord intelligencer to Psyche her Majesty'.[31] William Holder, fellow of the Royal Society, declared both sight and hearing to be 'the Senses of Learning' as they are the 'most capable of receiving communication of Thoughts and Notions by selected Signes'. Holder also compared the relative merits of these senses: vision, unlike audition, needed light and 'a right Line to the objects'; 'Sound can pass to the Ears, where visual Rayes cannot to the Eye.' Sight can identify a greater variety and number of objects at once and comprehend 'Quiesent objects' which the ear failed to detect. That both hearing and seeing could 'embrace their Objects at greater distance' than the other senses, made them ideal for communication, yet, remarked Holder, it is sight which 'takes in at a greater distance' than hearing.[32]

---

[28] Noel Chomel, *Dictionnaire oeconomique, or the Family Dictionary*, 2 vols (London, 1725), I, s.v. 'Ear'.

[29] Henry Peacham (the Elder), *The Garden of Eloquence, conteyning the figures of Grammer and Rhetorick, from whence maye bee gathered all manner of Flowers, Coulors, Ornaments, exornations, forms, and fashions of speech* (London, 1577), sig. B3v; Edward Phillips *The Mysteries of Love and Eloquence, or, the Arts of Wooing and Complementing* (London, 1658), sig. N3v; *The Spectator*, no. 472 [Steele] 1 September 1712.

[30] 'Edward Search' [Abraham Tucker], *Vocal Sounds* (London, 1773), p. 1.

[31] Brathwayt, *Essaies upon the Five Senses*, p. 6; Thomas Tomkis [?], *Lingua; or the Combat of the Tongue* (London, 1607), p. 6. See also Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1621), p. 34.

[32] William Holder, *Elements of Speech: an Essay of Inquiry into The Natural Production of Letters: with an Appendix Concerning Persons Deaf and Dumb* (London, 1669), pp. 1-3.

Much discussion has focused on historical shifts in a perceived hierarchy of the senses.[33] This hierarchy has been judged by gauging the relative dominance of particular senses in ritual and everyday life, yet it is difficult to determine which sense was considered to be most valuable to people now long dead. Inferences can be made by reading their records, but this knowledge has filtered down through written works or artistic depictions and since both media are visually based they might stress a visual bias of the recorder. Furthermore, certain individuals would have reason to privilege one sense; painters and carpenters might have cherished their sense of sight, musicians might have feared losing their sense of hearing.[34] Francis Grose's 'On the comparative state of the Deaf and Blind' provides a late-eighteenth century view of the disabilities of deafness and blindness. Grose qualifies his statement that a deaf man seems more melancholic with a subtle observation that a deaf man would feel more isolated in company than a blind man, while a blind man would feel more isolated when alone than a deaf man. 'Perhaps', he opined 'blindness may be most tolerable to an illiterate man, and deafness to a learned one.'[35]

In this chapter I will consider the various ways in which people living between 1560 and 1760 regarded their sense of hearing. Attention will be paid to the ways that people described their sense of hearing, how and when they thought about it, and how much they valued it. I will consider the views of natural

---

[33] Lucien Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais*, trans. Beatrice Gottlieb (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), pp. 424-5, 432-6; Lowe, *The History of Bourgeois Perception*, pp. 7, 24; D.R. Woolf, 'Speech, Text, and Time: the Sense of Hearing and the Sense of the Past in Renaissance England', *Albion*, 18 (1986), 159-94. Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes. The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 21-82.

[34] For a consideration of this problem see David Chidester, *Word and Light. Seeing, Hearing and Religious Discourse* (Urbana, Ill., 1992), p. x. Chidester considers conclusions about the relative importance of the senses to be fruitless, and argues that they reveal only the bias of the analyst. Expression of a preferred sense 'tells us nothing about seeing and hearing', but only that there is disagreement. See also Jonathan Rée, *I See a Voice. A Philosophical History of Language, Deafness and the Senses* (London, 1999).

[35] Francis Grose, 'On the comparative state of the deaf and blind' in *The Olio: Being a Collection of Essays etc.* (posth., London, 1792), p. 258.

philosophers, early 'scientists' and medical practitioners, but will also pay attention to the opinions of people who did not have any specialist knowledge of the processes of audition and acoustics, bearing in mind that some of the more specialist views would have filtered down into popular consciousness during the period.[36]

Even for those with specialist knowledge of medicine or acoustics, the sense of hearing was not fully comprehensible in the early modern period. In the eighteenth century Joseph Du Verney claimed that 'Of all the Organs assign'd to the Use of Animals, we have the least knowledge of those of the Senses; but there is none more obscure than that of Hearing'.[37] Francis Bacon identified some gaps in the knowledge of acoustics upon which further work was needed in order to gain a fuller understanding of the nature of sounds and the mechanics of hearing. These included: how the density of objects and materials affected their sound-absorbing properties; whether treble sounds were perceptible from a greater distance than bass sounds; the nature of echoes; the carriage of sounds by the wind; and whether the ear is temporarily affected by very loud noises 'or a great silence' in the same way that the eye is confused when moving from bright light into dark, or dull light into bright.[38] In the seventeenth century Samuel Morland, inventor of a 'speaking trumpet', admitted that the nature of sounds was largely mysterious 'and consequently too fine and too subtil a thing for humane reason and understanding

---

[36] For a comprehensive review of scientific advances see Penelope Gouk, 'Some English Theories of Hearing in the Seventeenth Century: Before and After Descartes' in Charles Burdett, Michael Fend and Penelope Gouk (eds), *The Second Sense - studies in hearing and musical judgement from antiquity to the seventeenth century* (London, 1991), pp. 95-115; Penelope Gouk, *Music, Science and Natural Magic in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, 1999); Frederick Vinton Hunt, *Origins of Acoustics: The Science of Sound from Antiquity to the Age of Newton* (New Haven, 1978), pp. 82-140.

[37] Joseph Guichard Du Verney, *Treatise on the Organ of Hearing*, trans. John Marshall (London, 1737), p. vii.

[38] Francis Bacon, translation of his 'The History and First Inquisition of Sound and Hearing', in Basil Montagu (ed.), *The Works of Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England*, 16 vols (London, 1825-36) XV, pp. 232, 240, 243-5.

to comprehend.' On the subject of how sounds moved through the air, pertinent to the design of his device, Morland worried that 'the more we torment our thoughts about it, the less we understand it, and are forced to confess our Ignorance.'[39]

Hearing was used in different ways according to the context. Sometimes people would listen attentively for a sound, at other times they would deliberately turn a 'deaf ear'. The sense of hearing could be acute, but it could also be confused or deceived by inexplicable sounds or unusual environments. In the first half of this chapter I will examine the various ways that the sense of hearing was thought to function in the early modern period; bearing in mind four key points: firstly that hearing was regarded as an active sense - the ear was an active organ, and that the interpretation of sounds was thought to take place in the ear itself and that the quality of ear would determine the sophistication of the analysis. The second point of discussion will be the way that hearing could be trained to focus on particular sounds, thus providing a positive advantage when carrying out occupational tasks. Next the focus will turn to the ways that hearing was thought to become more sensitive in particular contexts, for instance, when suspicious about the activities of another person, or at night when sight was suppressed in the dark. To conclude this section I will consider the circumstances in which the ear was thought to become oversensitive to particular sounds, and how it could become confused and deluded. The second half of the chapter explores the implications that a lack of hearing had for deaf members of early modern English society.

Active Hearing

Descriptions of ears in the early modern period suggest a belief that the sense of hearing was active and selective. Whereas modern conceptions of hearing

---

[39] Samuel Morland, *Tuba Stentoro-phonica - An Instrument of Excellent Use, As well at Sea as at Land* (London, 1671), pp. 5-7.

regard the ear a passive organ, a mere receptacle for sounds, to the seventeenth-century author and lexicographer Edward Philips ears were 'interpreters of sounds'.[40] In an essay comparing the relative merits of the senses, first published in 1620, Richard Brathwayt asserted that hearing is 'one of the activest and laborioust faculties of the soule'. Theorising that the ear sifts sounds and 'is open to receive, ministering matter sufficient for the mind to digest', Brathwayt argued that a practised ear does this most efficiently.[41] Some people did argue during the early modern period that the ear was not the site of this activity - for example Alexander Ross asserted that hearing and the other senses, 'are patients in receiving the species of their objects, not agents upon their objects', and therefore that the 'sense of hearing is meerly passive'.[42] However, throughout the period the description of types of ear do suggest a prevailing belief in the active nature of hearing.

Types of Ear

According to Brathwayt's theory, the sounds which a particular ear would relish or ignore would depend on the attitude or the career of the person. He wrote; 'In affaires conferring delight, the voluptuous man hath an excellent *eare*; in matters of profit, the worldly-minded man is attentive'. Types of ear were determined by the refinement and character of the person and Brathwait described how the 'common sort ... have their ears in their eyes' leading them to ignore the speech of people for whom they adopt a superficial dislike, thus displaying a

---

[40] Phillips, *Mysteries of Love and Eloquence*, sig. N4v. Theodor Adorno noted that in the 'advanced industrial era' hearing is regarded as 'unconcentrated and passive ... dozy and inert', *In Search of Wagner*, ed. by Rodney Livingstone (London, 1981), pp. 99-100.
[41] Brathwayt, *Essaies upon the Five Senses*, pp. 6, 12.
[42] A[lexander] R[oss], *Arcana Microcosmi: Or, The hid Secrets of Man's Body discovered; In an Anatomical Dual between Aristotle and Galen concerning the Parts thereof* (London, 1652), pp. 243-4.

vulgar lack of skill. The 'impartiall' or 'judicious' ear 'observes' what is spoken and admires only reason. A 'discreet eare' was possessed by members of the better sort, whose hearing marshalled their other senses.[43] 'Modest' or 'discreet' ears would be found on modest or discreet people. Modest ears were offended by boastful or bawdy talk.[44] Those with keen hearing had 'diligent' or 'earnest' ears that would 'itch', 'glow', or 'tingle' when they detected sounds or words which engendered interest or caused offence.[45] Poet John Gay suggested that ears would become 'cred[u]lous' to flattering sounds.[46] The application of these adjectives - discreet, modest, impartial, diligent, earnest, itching, glowing, tingling and credulous - to the ear, connotes that the site of active perception was thought to be there and not in the mind.

Just as experience and circumstance could sharpen the ear, it might also become deafened, dulled, 'fill'd' or tired by overexposure to certain sounds.[47] The author of a fictional journey around London written at the close of the seventeenth century, when commenting on the noise of the city, noted that he and his companion needed to recover their ears 'from the deafness which the confused noise of the street occasioned in 'em'.[48] William Gouge urged husbands to resist a temptation to chide their wives continually as eventually their words would not be heeded;

---

[43] Brathwayt, *Essaies upon the Five Senses*, pp. 7-9.
[44] John Earle, *Microcosmography: Or, A Piece of the World Discover'd in Essays and Characters* (London, 1632) pp. 82-3.
[45] For examples see John Flavell, *Husbandry Spiritualized; or the heavenly use of earthly things* (London, 1669), 'The author to the reader', **4v; Thomas Dekker, *A Rod for Run-awayes. Gods tokens, of his feareful judgements, sundry wayes prononced upon this city, and on severall persons, both flying from it, and staying in it* (1626) in Frank Percy Wilson (ed.), *The Plague Pamphlets of Thomas Dekker* (Oxford, 1925), p. 169; Phillips, *Mysteries of Love and Eloquence*, sig. V5v; *Pepys*, V, p. 60 (22 February 1664).
[46] John Gay, *Trivia: Or the Art of Walking the Streets of London* (London, 1716), book III, 273.
[47] Greene (ed.), *The Meditations of Elizabeth Delaval*, p. 32; *The Spectator*, no. 39 [Addison] 14 April 1711; Brathwayt, *Essaies upon the Five Senses*, p. 6.
[48] Tom Brown, *Amusements Serious and Comical. Calculated for the Meridian of London* (London, 1700), p. 22.

> For as birds which alwaies abide in Belfries where much ringing is, are not a whit afrighted with their lowd sound; so wives who have their eares from time to time filled with their husbands rebuke, by use are brought, nothing at all to be moved therewith.[49]

Brathwait claimed that the ears of the husband of a shrew would become miserable when deafened by her 'incessant clamour'.[50] Stony ears were impenetrable to certain sounds, such as sobs and sighs.[51] A 'deaf ear' would turn deliberately and metaphorically, from sounds in the same way that a 'blind eye' would turn to sights. This selectivity could be used both negatively and positively. The ears of the wilful or angry would become deaf to reason.[52] A proverb required that 'obscene words must have a deaf ear.'[53] The 'wise man', depicted by the seventeenth-century poet Nicholas Breton, had a 'deafe ear' to the charmer.[54] One way that servants could, in a small way, resist the authority of their masters, would have been to turn a deaf ear to their instructions or summons. It would have been difficult to prove that a servant had deliberately ignored commands and signals, so punishment might have been avoided by servants engaging in such intransigence. Days after purchasing a bell to summon his maids, Pepys resolved to buy a bigger one after Elizabeth had failed to attract attention in the early hours of the morning. When unwell the following year, Elizabeth again attempted to rouse some assistance by chiming the bell, but Pepys remarked, it was 'strange to see how dead sleep our people sleeps, that she was fain to ring for an hour before anybody

---

[49] William Gouge, *Of Domesticall duties. Eight Treatises* (London, 1622), p. 384.
[50] Brathwayt, *Essaies upon the Five senses*, p. 135.
[51] Thomas Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of Jack Wilton* (1594) in Nashe, *Works*, II, p. 258.
[52] William Shakespeare, *The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth* (London, 1623), I, iv, 53 - 'Wrath makes him deaf'; *The Rape of Lucrecre* (London, 1594), line 495 - 'Will is deaf and hears no heedful friends'.
[53] Fuller, *Gnomologia*, p. 157, no. 3694
[54] Nicholas Breton, *The Good and the Badde, or, Descriptions of Worthies, and Unworthies of this Age* (London, 1616), p. 22.

would wake.'[55] The maids might have chosen to turn a deaf ear to the chimes of their mistress, and then later claimed to have not heard them.

It is easier to use vision selectively than it is to use the sense of hearing likewise. Lidded eyes can close, and the gaze can be averted, but lidless ears cannot be physically shut off.[56] Francis Bacon argued that sight was less vulnerable to 'odious' or 'noisome' objects than hearing, noting that 'in audibles the grating of a saw that is sharpened, and other like sounds, cause an horror'.[57] However, not all the sounds available to be heard were consciously perceived. The filtration of sounds from the environment to the brain depended on the cultural importance placed upon certain types of sounds in particular contexts. Contemporaries were well aware of this selectivity and of the difference between hearing and listening; that the ear could be closed to some sounds, but should be open to receive others. In *The Tempest* Prospero bids Miranda to 'ope thine ear, Obey and be attentive'.[58]

Honed hearing

It was recognised that people were able to cultivate their ability to hear, thereby improving their orientation skills and their ability to identify the properties of materials and structures. The sense of hearing could be attuned through experience. In a compendium of trades it was asserted that in youth 'The Ear may

---

[55] *Pepys*, IV, p. 323-5 (3-6 October 1663); p. 348 (26 October 1663); V, p. 322 (16 November 1664).
[56] Jonathan Rée considers this distinction in *I See a Voice*, pp. 51-2 - 'Visual perception, in contrast [to aural perception], is distinctly voluntary and subject to intellectual control.' See also Max Peter Baumann, 'The Ear as Organ of Cognition: Prolegomenon to the Anthropology of Listening' in Max Peter Baumann, Artur Simon and Ulrich Wegner (eds), *European Studies in Ethnomusicology. Historical Developments and Recent Trends* (Wihelmshaven, 1992), pp. 123-4.
[57] Bacon, 'The History and First Inquisition of Sound and Hearing' in Montagu (ed.), *Works of Francis Bacon,* XV, p. 242; Alexander Ross criticised this opinion, arguing that some sights were so odious that they caused people to swoon, in *Arcana Microcosmi*, p. 246.
[58] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (London, 1623), I, ii, 37-8.

be improved, the Taste refined, much easier than in advanced years' and during apprenticeships skills which required acute hearing would have been refined.[59]

Hearing was employed to assess structural integrity. Visiting Kew gardens in 1761, Count Kielmansegge admired the newly erected buildings. The wooden frames covered in stucco were constructed 'So cleverly ... that you would swear they were solid buildings of quarry stone, unless by knocking them you discovered the truth from the sound.'[60] When something did not sound right it could indicate structural damage or incorrect procedure; 'men know the bell is crackt, when they heare it toll'd', as cracked bells sounded dull and clanged.[61] The squeak of a cart wheel which strained under an excessive load would alert the hearer to the risk of damage.[62] On board a boat Pepys became so anxious when he heard the sound of ice 'Crackeling' beneath him that he insisted that the watermen landed immediately, and he continued his journey by foot.[63] Buildings ravaged by fire would crack and spit, and these sounds sometimes alerted those nearby before they smelt or saw smoke.[64]

Those charged with the protection of land, people or property, such as guards, shepherds and gamekeepers would have relied on their sense of hearing.

---

[59] R. Campbell, *The London Tradesman: Being a Compendious view of All the Trades, Professions, Arts, both Liberal and Mechanic, now practised in the Cities of London and Westminster* (London, 1747), p. 92. Descriptions of the use of hearing in carrying out tasks are rare. It was not until the nineteenth century that the subtle sounds for which wheelwrights listened were noted, by George Sturt, *The Wheelwright's Shop* (1923), repr. edn (Cambridge, 1993). Sturt describes the sounds heard when spokes are driven into the mortices, dowels into the dowel-holes, and how wheels have 'several voices', pp. 127-8, 135.

[60] Count F. Kielmansegge, *Diary of a Journey to England in the years 1761-2*, trans. Countess Kilemansegge (London, 1902), p. 78 (7 October 1761).

[61] Thomas Fuller *The Holy State and The Profane State* (1642), ed. M. Graff Walten, 2 vols (New York, 1938), II, p. 180.

[62] Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English tongues* (London, 1611), s.v. 'crier' - 'The worst wheele of the wagon is that which creakes most'.

[63] *Pepys*, VI, p. 340 (27 December 1665).

[64] Geoffrey Vaughan Blackstone, *A History of the British Fire Service* (London, 1957), p. 31; Gay, *Trivia*, book III, 360. Other structural damage could also be perceived by the ear; Ralph Thoresby described the sounds of a collapsing auction chamber in 1693, Joseph Hunter (ed), *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby FRS, author of the Topography of Leeds (1677-1724)* 2 vols (London, 1830), I, p. 231.

Sentinels guarding a military camp needed 'ready listening eares; for many times it chanceth to heare that, which the obscureness of the night will not suffer to see'.[65] Bells adorned the necks of sheep and cattle, enabling the shepherds to locate them in the fields and a quick ear would have been an advantage for people needing to locate animals.[66] Hawks carried small bells on their legs, and careful handlers would ensure that these did not overload the bird. Ideally, these bells had a shrill sound but were 'not both of one sound', when ringing in unison the sound was clearer when one was at least a note higher than the other.[67]

Sharp hearing and the ability to judge the soundness of objects and to detect damage would have been advantageous for the employees of many trades and professions. Musicians and instrument makers needed the ability to detect the pitch of notes. Alerting his readers to the need for some informed guesswork when they attempt to rig-up a 'Ho-Plow', the agricultural writer Jethro Tull used the analogy of a fiddler whose 'Ear will direct him in turning them [the pegs of his instrument], 'till his Fiddle is in Tune; so the Plowman by his Eyes, his Feeling, and his Reason, must be directed in the setting his Plow'.[68] In his guidance to merchants Robert Lewes remarked that '[e]xperience tells us, That all *commodities* are not learned by one *Sense* alone', and that in order to assess the quality of some materials, especially metallic and mineral ones, the merchant's 'Ear giveth a help to the Eye'.[69] Women referring to Gervase Markham's *Complete Hus-Wife* learnt that to ensure success in the kitchen they should be 'cleanly both in body and garments, she must have a quick eye, a curious nose, a perfect taste and a ready ear'. In a passage describing butter churning, Markham taught that it was possible

---

[65] Robert Barret, *The theorike and practike of moderne Warres* (London, 1598), p. 106.
[66] Ernest Morris, *Tintinnabula: Small Bells* (London, 1959), p. 149.
[67] T.S. *A jewell for the gentrie* (London, 1614), sig. F1.
[68] J[ethro] T[ull], *The Horse-Hoing Husbandry: Or, an Essay on the Principles of Tillage and Vegetation*, 2nd edn (Dublin, 1733), p. 199.
[69] Lewes Roberts *The Merchants Map of Commerce: Wherein the Universal Manner and Matter of Trade is Compendiously Handled*, 3rd edn (London, 1677), p. 37.

to perceive the point at which the butter breaks when its sound became light, sharp and 'more spirity'.[70] Some machinery incorporated sounds signals for the operator to listen for; the mill clack was a bell which rang to signal the need for more grain to be added, and a proverb noted that; 'In vain is the mill-clacke, if the Miller his hearing lack.'[71]

Doctors diagnosing illness might have listened carefully for the indicative sounds of particular ailments. Hippocrates had urged doctors to pay special attention to the voice, gnashing of teeth, yawning, hiccups and flatulence when examining patients, and the practice was termed 'auscultation'.[72] In his classic treatise on the circulation of blood, William Harvey discussed the sounds produced by the passage of drinking water through a horse's body; 'making a sound, and the pulsation may be heard and felt' and likened this to the sounds of blood pulsing through the chest. Harvey observed that:

> There may be the possibility of discovering ... the motions of the internal parts of bodies, whether animal, vegetable or mineral, by the sound they make, that one may discover the works perform'd in the several offices and shops of a man's body, and thereby discover what instrument or engine is out of order ...[73]

Robert Hooke also called attention to body sounds such as heart beats, wind in the guts, and rasping joints.[74] Christopher Bennet noted that in a consumptive patient the larynx made 'a Sound like the ticking of a Watch that beats Seconds'.[75]

---

[70] Gervase Markham, *The English hus-wife, contayning, the inward and outward vertues which ought to be in a compleat woman* (1615), ed. Michael R. Best (Montreal, 1986), pp. 64, 174.
[71] George Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum - Or Outlandish proverbs, sentences &c.* (London, 1651), p. 20.
[72] Peter F. Ostwald, *The Semiotics of Human Sound* (The Hague, 1973), p. 229; Nathaniel Bailey, *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (London, 1721), s.v. 'auscultation ... a hearkening or listening to'.
[73] William Harvey, 'De mortu cordis', in *The Works of William Harvey*, ed. Robert Willis (London, 1847), p. 32.
[74] Robert Hooke, 'The Method of Improving Natural Philosophy' in *Posthumous Works of Robert Hooke*, 2nd edn (London, 1705), p. 39.
[75] Christopher Bennet, *Theatrum tabidorum: or, the Nature and cure of consumption* (London, 1720), pp. 149-50. For other examples see P.J. Bishop, 'Auscultation before Laennec', *Tubercle*, 37 (1956), 213-15.

Over a century before René Théophile Hyacinthe Laennec invented the stethoscope, Hooke recognised that the best way to interpret quiet sounds would be to amplify them. The ear needed to be aided by 'Helps' by which 'there may be a possibility that by Otocousticons many sounds ... may be made sensible.[76] Pepys described Hooke's demonstration to the Royal Society of 'the Outaucousticon' which was a great glass bottle which amplified sounds.[77] Hooke's implement aided the detection of sounds without increasing their volume, others sought to create instruments which amplified sounds at their source. With the aim of developing an instrument which would be useful both in war and peace time, on land and at sea, during the 1670s Samuel Morland finessed his design for a 'speaking trumpet' (see fig. 2). Also known as the 'stenorophone', this conical device could ensure that sounds and voices could be carried over distances further than a mile, depending on the wind.[78] At the end of his discourse Morland listed the potential applications for his device: at sea, to ensure commands were audible over the broiling surf; in battle to allow coded messages and commands to be heard by the troops; heralds could use the speaking trumpet to issue proclamations and Common Crier could call people to King's Bench (he claimed that people were often punished for being unable to hear this call); at work the instrument would enable overseers to be heard over the noise of work; and the device would also improve the clarity of instructions issued to those extinguishing fires.[79]

The ear was not sufficiently sensitive to locate and assess all sounds in all contexts. Some sounds were very quiet and some environments very noisy, and it

---

[76] Hooke, 'The method of improving natural philosophy', pp. 39-40. In Francis Bacon's utopian 'soundhouses', where sounds could be investigated and understood, there were 'certain helps which set to the ear do further the hearing greatly', *New Atlantis* (1627), Bacon, *Works,* III, pp. 162-3.
[77] *Pepys,* IX, p. 146 (2 April 1668).
[78] Morland, *Tuba Stentoro-phonica*, p. 1; *The Diary of Thomas Isham*, p. 75 (28 December, 1671), p. 105 (29 April 1672); Ralph Thoresby saw one in 1703, Hunter (ed), *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby,* I, p. 414 (17 March 1703).
[79] Morland, *Tuba Stentoro-phonica*, pp. 13-14.

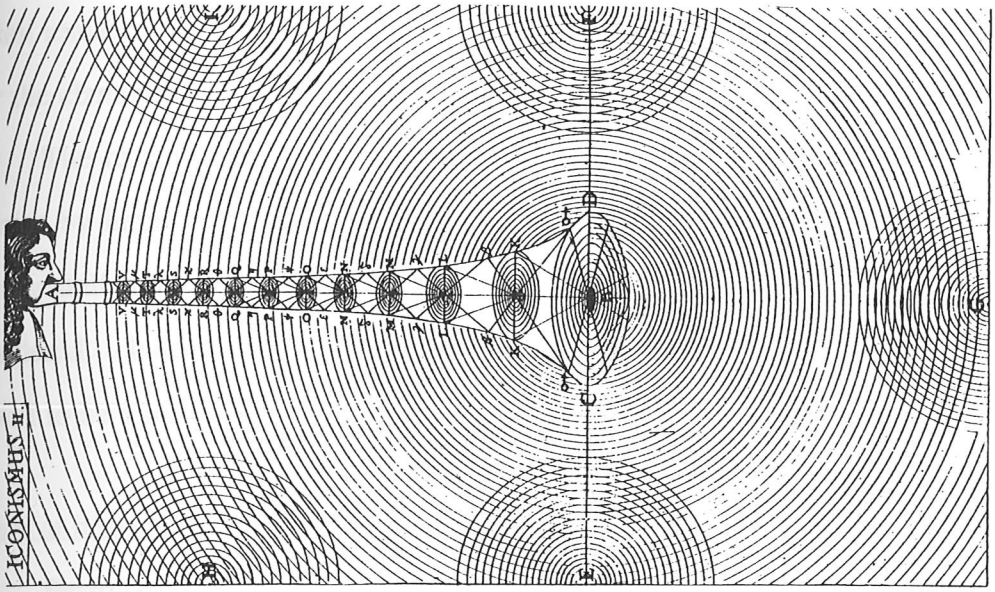


fig. 2 Sound transmission in speaking trumpets, from Samuel Morland, *Tuba Stentoro-phonica* (1672).

could be difficult to pick out particular sounds. Thomas Hobbes noticed that in the 'noyse of the day' the voice is 'Obscured and made weak'.[80] Distancing oneself from noisy environments might have assisted the ear's focusing, and William Britten remarked that 'one alone from the tumult, or outside of a wood, can easiest hear the clamours and outcries within'.[81]

The reception of sounds could be improved by using amplificatory devices but also by improving hearing through practice and experience. People used their hearing skills both at work, and in their everyday lives, yet these skills were rarely considered. Indeed constant awareness of the processes of hearing would have proved to be a handicap.

Sensitive hearing in context

Personal judgements and priorities would have determined the degree of attention given to a sound.[82] For instance, the ear might have been pricked by suspicions about the activities of others, or when sight was obscured by the dark or in fog.

Suspicious ears

Suspicion about the wrong-doing of others would cause keen ears to prick up. In the household a suspicious ear would be attuned to the servants, errant children and spouses suspected of infidelity. In his satirical advice Swift recommended that servants ensured that when engaging in 'tattle with some crony Servant in the same street' they should leave the door open, 'that you may get in without knocking, when you come back, otherwise your Mistress may know you are gone out, and you will be chided.' Swift also suggested that neighbouring

---

[80] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge, 1996), p. 16.
[81] William Britten, *Silent Meeting, a Wonder to the World; yet practised by the Apostles, and owned by the People of God, scornfully called Quakers* (London, 1660), p. 1.
[82] Raymond Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World* (New York, 1977), p. 152.

servants invited 'to junket with' them in the evening should make 'a particular way of tapping or scraping at the Kitchin Window, which you may hear, but not your Master or Lady, whom you must take Care not to disturb or frighten at such unseasonable Hours.'[83] Children attracted suspicion not just through their noise, but also by their unaccountable silence - 'when children stand quiet they have done some ill.'[84] The possessively jealous man figured in Robert Burton's descriptions of melancholic people. Believing his wife to be unfaithful he listened for every little sound and misinterpreted each to be the sound of her lover; 'If a Mouse doe but stirre, or the casement clatter, that's the villan there he is'.[85]

Richard Brathwayt claimed that hearing accommodates justice better than the other senses.[86] The epithets 'Listening', 'attentive', 'inquiring', and 'judging' were applied to 'Eares' by Edward Phillips.[87] Innkeepers were ordered by the York authorities to 'give a diligent eare' to rumours during the Rising of the North in 1569.[88] Much criminal activity was detected by earwitnesses who often described the sounds which either alerted them to a crime or misdemeanour or which confirmed their suspicions.[89] Much of these suspicious sounds had a verbal basis but some surrounded other types of sound. Henry Smith, an embroiderer of St-Martin's-le-Grand, Westminster, stood accused in 1624 of coining money. In their statements Smith's two apprentices revealed previous suspicions about their master based upon their sighting three stones in his possession, each engraved to

---

[83] Jonathan Swift, *Directions to Servants* (1745), repr. C. Rawson (London, 1995), pp. 7, 11.
[84] Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum*, p. 31.
[85] Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 682.
[86] Brathwayt, *Essaies upon the Five Senses*, p. 11.
[87] Phillips, *Mysteries of Love and Eloquence*, sig. V5v. See also William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (London, 1623), III, i, 42; Thomas Dekker, *The gulls Horne-Booke* (1609) in George Saintsbury (ed.), *Elizabethan and Jacobean Pamphlets* (London, 1892), p. 263.
[88] Angelo Raine (ed.), *York Civic Records VI,* The Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 112 (Wakefield, 1948), p. 162.
[89] See, for example, the noise which alerted on witness to a crime in 1624, in R.C. Anderson (ed.) *The Book of Examinations and Depositions 1622-44,* Southampton Record Society, 4 vols (Southampton, 1929-36), I, p. 28 (13 February 1624).

look like coins. One was also curious about some sand he detected on a shilling he had been given by his master. These suspicions were only confirmed when the apprentices heard 'loud knocking late at night with a hammer'.[90] In this case the night-time sounds verified suspicions. A witness to an adultery case of 1709 described hearing the bed of one of the defendants 'make a Noise like cracking'. However, until she had seen them together, this witness could not be sure that the sound she had heard was that made by two people lying together on a bed.[91] In this case hearing aroused suspicion, but seeing was believing.

The case of Theodore Christopher Fabricus, arraigned for the murder of his servant, Grace Shaw, was heard at the Old Bailey in July 1721 and the transcripts of his trial reveal how neighbours had been alerted to the murder and to previous attacks by the sounds of violence and of distress which they had heard.[92] The statements of various neighbours provide a catalogue of sounds heard on the day of the murder. Earwitnesses mentioned hearing Shaw 'shriek out' and making a 'dismal cry' and stated that Fabricus had regularly subjected his servant to audibly violent beatings. Neighbour Elizabeth Knighting stated 'I know her [Shaw's] voice, and have often heard her shriek' and another neighbour swore that, 'I did not see the Prisoner strike the deceas'd but (as I verily believe) I heard him almost every day, for two months together, and particularly on the Sunday before her death, I heard a great Noise of beating and crying'. A third witness recalled hearing whip cracks from within the house. Indeed, most of the evidence upon which Fabricus was convicted was provided by earwitness evidence.

---

[90] London, LMA, WJ/SR (NS)/8, Westminster Sessions of the Peace Rolls, 1624, fol. 20.
[91] London, LMA, DL/C/251 Consistory Court of London. Deposition Book, February 1709 - October 1710, fol. 166 (22 November 1709).
[92] *Select Trials at the Sessions House in the Old Bailey for murder, robbery, rapes, sodomy, coining, frauds, bigamy and other offences* (1742), facs edn, Marriage, Sex, and the Family in England, 1660-1800, 21, 4 vols (New York, 1985), I, pp. 56-62 (all examples from this case are taken from these pages).

When Vincent Davis was accused of the murder of his wife in 1725, his landlady claimed to have heard him utter abusive words on the night of her death before witnessing the fatal stabbing. In her statement Mary Jeffries, a neighbour, asserted that as there was 'only a thin Partition betwixt her Stair-case and mine' she was able to hear a disturbance that night 'and a Noise of two or three People running down stairs.'[93] Two earwitnesses to a murder committed in January 1722 both recalled hearing the sound of a candlestick being thrown.[94] The evidence which caused Samuel Thomas to be indicted of murdering his wife in 1733 was also based on sounds heard by earwitnesses. Eleanor Bird was woken between twelve and one o'clock 'by a great Noise in the Entry below'. Ann Rush, who shared the room with Bird, described the sounds of fist-blows and foot-stamping as Thomas was 'beating his Wife sadly in the Entry'. Neighbour Susan Marriage stated that she often heard Thomas abuse his wife, and on the night in question had 'heard him draw her along under my Window like a Beast.' Another neighbour recalled hearing Mrs Thomas cry out 'with a bitter Groan' during the argument. Thomas then dragged his wife up the stairs, into the room where Bird and Rush lay in the dark. When asked how she had known that Thomas had dragged his wife up the stairs after this attack, Rush replied that she had heard this. Rush then recalled hearing sounds of continued attacks in the room, stating that she 'heard him stamp, and I believe by the Sound he stamp'd upon her, but I will not be positive, because I had not Candle.' Bird also claimed to have heard 'something gush' after perceiving the sounds of beating and kicking, adding that she 'was afraid it was Blood.' Once the scene was illuminated the women were able to see the gore they had heard spill.[95]

---

[93] *Select Trials at the Old Bailey*, II, pp. 191-3.
[94] *Select Trials at the Old Bailey*, II, pp. 130-1.
[95] A.P. Herbert, *Mr Gay's London. With extracts from Proceedings at the Sessions of the Peace, and Oyer and Terminer for the City of London and County of Middlesex in the Years 1732 and 1733* (London, 1948), pp. 94-6.

In two of these cases, witnesses recalled hearing previous attacks. However, the risk of crying wolf was revealed in one case where previous aural experience of attacks caused neighbours to ignore the sound of an actual attack; 'A Out cry of Murder was so frequently heard in that House, that the Disturbance on this Occasion was little regarded by the Neighbours'.[96] In all of these examples the sounds described by the earwitnesses proved to be important factors in establishing the sequence of events and in securing a conviction.

In the dark

The sense of hearing might become particularly acute in stressful situations, such as when travelling unaccompanied along a highway or at night. Hearing could assist in orientation, and when lost in an unfamiliar part of London, Pepys was guided by the bark of a dog.[97] The bells of coastal parishes and the particular sounds made when waves hit certain rocks could orient a navigator.[98] River navigation became difficult on very foggy nights and lights were insufficiently bright to penetrate the fog; so the watermen who worked the Thames listened for drum beats to guide them safely to the riverside.[99]

Proverbial wisdom highlighted the sensitivity of hearing in the dark; 'Day has eyes, night ears'.[100] In the silence of the night, sounds like the crying of a neighbours' baby, the barking of a stray dog or the ringing of the bellman might have been disregarded, but other sounds, particularly strange or unidentifiable ones, would have made the listener alert.[101] Fear would sometimes cause the

---

[96] *Select Trials at the Old Bailey*, II, p. 305.
[97] *Pepys*, III, p. 156 (5 August 1662).
[98] Alain Corbin, *Village Bells. Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-Century French Countryside*, trans. Martin Thom (Basingstoke, 1999), p. 100; *The Pinder of Wakefield*, ed. E.A. Horsman, English Reprints Series, 12 (Liverpool, 1956), p. 4.
[99] *Evelyn*, V, p. 363 (8 November, 1699).
[100] M. L. Anderson (ed.), *The James Carmichaell Collection of Proverbs in Scots* (1628) repr. edn (Edinburgh, 1957), p. 101, no. 1437.
[101] David Kelley, *The Evidence of the Senses. A Realist Theory of Perception* (Baton Rouge,

fretful listener to reach false conclusions. In these circumstances the ear was hypersensitive, and interpreted any little sound to indicate danger.

Householders would have kept a keen ear for the sounds which betrayed an intruder in the hours of darkness.[102] William Harrison explained that outbuildings were located close to the main house to ensure that 'they are not so farre distant in sunder, but the goodman lieng in his bed may lightlie heare what is doone in each of them with ease, and call quicklie unto his meinie if anie danger should attach him'.[103] According to the Robert Kirk, the minister of Aberfoyle in Scotland, who described London in 1689, many Londoners kept a candle beside them all night, partly through fear of 'robbers'.[104] When a guest of Dudley Ryder was frightened by a noise in the night he 'raised the house for fear of thieves.' Ryder, who had given up his room for his guest, could not orient himself in his unfamiliar surroundings, but when he managed to find the door and investigate, he found nothing. He remarked that '[i]t is very terrible to be disturbed so in the night and especially in the dark. I had a kind of terror come upon me.'[105]

One night in 1664 Pepys fell into 'a most mighty sweat in the night' because 'knowing what money I have in the house and hearing a noise, I begin to sweat and worse, till I melted almost to water.' When none of the servants responded to his ringing for help Pepys thought his staff were being held hostage and remembered the sound of a stone thrown at his house earlier in the day,

---

Louisiana, 1986), p. 160.

[102] For evidence that rural dwellers were also concerned about this threat see E. Crittal (ed.), 'The Justicing Notebook of William Hunt 1744-1749', *Wiltshire Record Society*, 37 (Devizes, 1982), p. 62 (15 May 1747).

[103] William Harrison, *Description of England in Shakspere's Youth* (1577), ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, The New Shakspere Society, 6, 4 vols (London, 1877-1908), I, p. 238.

[104] Rev Robert Kirk, 'Sermons, conferences, men's opinions of the late Transactions with a description of London ' (1689), transcribed by Donald Maclean as 'London in 1689-90 by the Rev. R. Kirk. Part III', *London and Middlesex Archaeological Society Transactions*, new ser., 6 (London, 1933) 652-61, p. 652. For a sense of the level of darkness reached inside buildings at night see Jennifer Dawn Melville, 'The Use and Organisation of Domestic Space in late seventeenth-century London' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, Cambridge, 1999), p. 83.

[105] *Dudley Ryder*, p. 105 (25 September 1715); see also p. 349 (18 October 1716).

wondering if this had been a device to gauge whether the house was occupied. The culprit proved to be a dog who wanted 'lodging and so made a noyse'. On another occasion Pepys, aware that his wife and servants had 'night after night lately heard, noise over their heads upon the leads', was sensitised to the threat of misdeeds. Every mouse he heard that night he interpreted as a thief, and Pepys slept 'very brokenly all night'. On another occasion 'the fear of being robbed, having so much money in the house was very great', made Pepys panic when one of his maids made a noise on going to bed, a sound which Pepys would probably not normally have noticed. In November 1667, both Pepys and his wife were disturbed by noises which they believed to be people 'breaking down a window for people to get out - and then removing of stools and chairs, and plainly by and by going up and down our stairs.' Unable to get out of bed without making a noise himself, and thus alerting any intruders to their whereabouts, Pepys lay with Elizabeth for an hour worrying about these noises. Despite being eventually informed by his maid that the sound was that of his neighbour having the chimney cleared, Pepys did not relax, but spent an anguished evening in bed the following day, hearing fearful noises, which again proved to be those of chimney sweeping. It was after one o'clock that Pepys finally fell asleep, and he remarked 'I perceive well what the care of money and treasure in a man's house is to a man that fears to lose it.'[106]

Lacking visual referents the ear could become confused or deluded. Robert Barret, author of a sixteenth-century manual of effective battle techniques warned that 'we see, the sight and hearing is easily deceived, although it be by day, and how much more by night.'[107] Reliance on hearing in the dark could have led to hypersensitivity. Thomas Nashe recognised that;

---

[106] *Pepys*, V, p. 201 (11 July 1664); VI, p. 25 (30 January 1665); VIII, pp. 552-3 (29 November 1667).
[107] Barret, *The theorike and practike of moderne Warres*, p. 107.

> if in the dead of the night there be anie rumbling, knocking or disturbaunce neere us, wee straight dreame of warres or of thunder. If a dogge howle, we suppose we are transported into hell, where we hear the complaint of damned ghosts.[108]

Whilst riding in the countryside Venetian merchant Alessandro Magno and his companion found themselves to be lost. Hearing hoots around them the pair feared these were the signals of a group of robbers. Magno realised the hoots were actually owl cries when one flew close to him, but was unable to reassure his companion who had become 'overwhelmed by fright and unwilling to believe me. And so we walked along, he fearing and I laughing'.[109] When walking with a friend in 1661, Pepys met a companion 'and coming upon some trees near the neate-houses, he begun to whistle, which did give us some suspicion', mistakenly believing that he was signalling to a lurking miscreant.[110] Inexplicable sounds caused the hearer's ear to prick, giving fear a 'quick ear'.[111]

Confusion: dulling and bewildering the ear

It is clear that the ear could be tricked or confused and that innocent sounds could be misinterpreted as suspicious. Some people would exploit the fallibility of hearing for financial or strategic gain. In typically jaundiced prose, Phillip Stubbes grumbled in the late-sixteenth century about the tactics of barbers who exaggerated the 'snipping & snapping of the cycers' to trick the client and 'tawe out mony' by exaggerating the effort required.[112] Proverbial wisdom highlighted the deceit of

---

[108] Thomas Nashe, *The Terrors of the Night or a discourse of apparitions* (1594) in Nashe, *Works*, I, p. 356.
[109] C. Barron, C. Coleman, and C. Gobbi (eds), 'The London Journal of Alessandro Magno 1562', *London Journal*, 9 (1983), 136-52, p. 148.
[110] *Pepys*, II, p. 158 (19 August 1661).
[111] *Epicoene*, IV, v, 89.
[112] Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomy of Abuses* (1583), ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, The New Shakspere Society, 2 vols (London, 1877-82), II, p. 50.

the smith who 'gives one knock on the Iron, and two on the Anvil.'[113] Some might have followed Defoe's example of the young apothecary who;

> setting up in a part of the Town, where he had not much acquaintance, and fearing much, whether he should get into business, hir'd a man acquainted with such business, and made him be every morning between five and six, and often late in the evenings, working very hard at the great mortar; pounding and beating, tho' he had nothing to do with it, but beating some very needless thing, that all his neighbours might hear it, and find that he was in full employ, being at work early and late, and that consequently he must be a man of vast business.[114]

The smith and the apothecary hoped to deceive hearers that their services were in demand. Fraudulence could be more unscrupulous, and hoaxers manufactured noisy 'ghosts' to rid properties of inhabitants, or frighten potential owners.[115] Thunder was thought to spoil alcohol and Pepys wrote of a wine merchant, who when negotiating a deal in Bordeaux, hired 'a fellow to thunder' by manipulating a 'deale board' and to mimic the sounds of rain and hail, so that he could buy the wine cheaply by claiming it was spoiled. The scam was successful.[116]

Sixteenth-century military historian Thomas Procter noted the skilful deployment of martial sounds by Hannibal, who, when needing to pass a hill upon which the army of Fabricus the Roman was encamped, created a noisy rumpus to scare them away. He achieved this by fastening together several oxen and igniting them. The terrified cattle

---

[113] Fuller, *Gnomolgia,* p. 72, no. 1849.
[114] Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman, in Familiar Letters: Directing him in all the Several Parts and Progressions of Trade* (London, 1727), p. 261.
[115] James Raine Jnr (ed.), *Depositions from the Castle of York, relating to offences committed in the Northern Counties in the seventeenth century*, The Surtees Society, 40 (Durham, 1861), pp. 74-5. For an account of the eighteenth century 'Cock Lane Ghost' see Jenny Uglow, *Hogarth. A Life and A World* (London, 1997), p. 653. This cause celebre surrounded the supposed ghost 'scratching Fanny', whose sounds were exposed to be made by hoaxers.
[116] Pepys wrote of an attempt to prevent spoilage by thunder by laying iron on beer barrels - *Pepys*, IV, p. 365 (6 November 1663). For the deal see *Pepys*, VII, p. 256 (21 August 1666).

> ... were driven with great noise & larum, up to the enemies campe, which hearinge the terrible noise of the beasts, when they felt the force of the fire; & also being amazed with the sight, as though they stoode in doubt to fight with the dyvell, that made such a Whorlye burlie; -Hanibal the whilest, quietly conveied over his armie ...[117]

Sounds could have profound effects on the hearers. Rattles would calm children and music could effect the passions and emotions of adults.[118] On a purely physical level, loud sounds could deafen, a phenomenon I will return to later. Some thought that especially raucous sounds could induce madness.[119] Involvement in noisy traumatic events, such as battles, could have caused either temporary or long term effects to the hearer and warlike sounds were even thought capable of inducing miscarriages in pregnant women.[120] Their strategic use in war shows that sounds were also known to frighten people.

Early modern people used their hearing in different ways in different contexts. When they needed to they would listen for certain sounds, to verify a suspicion or as part of a skilled work technique. Hearing could be sharpened with experience or in particular contexts, but it could also become confused or bewildered by unusual sounds or in noisy environments, and could not always be relied upon to provide a true account of the sound world. Those without the ability to hear lived in this world of sounds, but did not hear the sounds. If hearing was important, how could deaf individuals cope?

---

[117] Thomas Procter, *Of the knowledge and conducte of warres* (London, 1578), p. 28.
[118] Britten, *Silent Meeting*, p. 2; Gouk, *Music, Science and Natural Magic*, pp. 165-6; *The Gentleman's Magazine*, no. 11 (April 1741), pp. 199-200.
[119] Roger North, 'The Life of the Hon. & Rev. Dr. John North', in Augustus Jessopp (ed.), *The Lives of the Norths*, 3 vols (London, 1890), II, p. 333.
[120] *The New Yeares' Wonder. Being a most cernaine [sic] and true Relation of thedisturned inhabitants of Kenton* (London, 1642), p. 7.

The deaf

In 1725 Noel Chomel defined deafness as a 'Distemper of the Ear', and highlighted the variable nature of the condition, noting that sufferers might not hear at all or might hear 'very imperfectly', that some are born deaf and that some become deaf 'by some Accident or other.'[121] Indeed, the term 'deafness' encompassed a wide variety of experiences including hearing impairments such as tinnitus, hearing loss experienced in old age, illness-induced deafness and damage to the inner ear caused by noisy work practices. The three most important distinctions to draw when discussing deafness are: firstly, between temporary and permanent hearing loss; secondly, between partial and profound deafness; and thirdly between deafness from birth ('congenital'), the onset of deafness after birth but before the development of language ('prelingual'), and deafness which developed after the mastery of language ('adventitious'). In early modern England those with congenital hearing loss, or who became deaf before they could learn to speak, were termed 'deaf and dumb', or 'deaf mutes'. For the purposes of this discussion they will be referred to as 'prelingually deaf'.[122]

Many early modern communities would have contained deaf people. Deafness was a side effect of many illnesses such as measles, mumps, smallpox and even of the common cold.[123] Suffering the effects of a spiked drink, Roger North lay on the ground for six hours, and afterwards noted that some have lost their hearing as a result of this 'unwholesome' practice.[124] Noisy work practices, especially for those working in the metal hammering trades, could induce deafness.

---

[121] Chomel, *Dictionnaire oeconomique,* s.v. 'deafness'.
[122] Harry G. Lang, *Silence of the Spheres. The Deaf Experience in the History of Science* (Westport, Conn., 1994), p. xvii.
[123] Nicholas Mirzoeff, 'Signs and citizens. Sign language and visual signs in the French Revolution', in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (eds), *Consumption of Culture 1600-1800: image, object and text* (London, 1995), p. 275. The deafness of Gilbert White was probably a legacy of the smallpox he contracted in his youth - Walter Johnson, *Gilbert White* (London, 1928), p. 38.
[124] Augustus Jessopp (ed.), *The Autobiography of Roger North* (London, 1887), p. 173.

Italian physician Bernardino Ramazzini, in his comprehensive treatise on occupational diseases, included gilders, goldsmiths and coppersmiths amongst workers identified as being at risk of suffering partial or total hearing loss through exposure to constant or loud noise. Coppersmiths, noted Ramazzini, 'have their ears so injured by that perpetual din ... that workers of this class become hard of hearing and, if they grow old at this work, completely deaf.' The use of gunpowder in mining would have had a detrimental effect on miners' hearing, and the sound of cannon and musket fire was thought to cause deafness amongst militia men.[125] Millers were also at risk of suffering hearing loss, as 'they live day and night in the noise of wheels and millstones and the roar of water falling from a height, so that they are nearly always hard of hearing; for the ear-drum is continually struck with too violent an impact and loses its tonus'.[126]

The preoccupation of the few historians who have discussed the deaf has been with attempts to teach sign language which would allow the deaf to communicate with others. Concentration on such attempts to rectify a perceived disability places a bias upon the experiences of a tiny minority of deaf people - the wealthy deaf. It neglects the experiences of the post-lingual deaf, who would have communicated fairly well through speech, and of the prelingually deaf who did not receive specialist education, thus ignoring the circumstances of the majority of the deaf population. I will initially consider the experiences of the those with minor hearing impairments and the adventitiously deaf, before moving to the prelingually deaf.

---

[125] Celia Fiennes noted that the miners of Buxton used gunpowder to break stone, Morris (ed.), *Journeys of Celia Fiennes*, p. 102; Ross, *Arcana Microcosmi*, p. 246.
[126] Bernardino Ramazzini, *De morbis artificum [Diseases of Workers]* (1713), Wilmer Cave Wright, ed. and trans. (Chicago, 1940), pp. 231-2, 437-9

Minor hearing impairments and adventitious deafness

Ralph Josselin, John Dee, Robert Hooke and Samuel Pepys all made diary entries about their experiences of temporary deafness or impaired hearing.[127] Pepys' right ear became 'almost deaf' after he caught a cold by 'sporting with Mrs Lane in the path of a draught'. After suffering earache for several days he tried a 'posset' and took pills for respite.[128] In 1588 the astrologer and mathematician John Dee suffered a 'humming' in his ears.[129] Hooke appears to have been especially afflicted with tinnitus which frequently induced insomnia. On the morning of 1 January 1673 he woke with a 'strange noyse' in his right ear 'like a horne or bell'.[130]

Oil and plant-based concoctions and treatments using extreme heat appeared amongst a plethora of cures available for temporary hearing loss and hearing impairments. In December 1672, hoping for a tinnitus cure, Hooke placed warm honey into his ear 'and stopt with wool and wrigled with the finger'. He also experimented with the oil of bitter almonds, but his condition persisted.[131] Noel Chomel recommended the consumption of 'as many Radishes as you please' to alleviate tinnitus and the application of the gall of a hare to cure deafness.[132] The recipe for an oil to aid hearing, included in Gervase Markham's *The English Hus-wife* (1615), required a live grey eel with a white belly to be placed in an earthen pot with a tight lid and cooked slowly under horse dung for two weeks.[133] Thomas

---

[127] *Josselin*, p. 59 (2 May 1646).
[128] *Pepys*, IV, pp. 318-20 (27-30 September 1663).
[129] James Orchard Halliwell (ed.), *The Private Diary of Dr. John Dee and the catalogue of his library of manuscripts*, The Camden Society, 19 (London, 1842), p. 30 (17 January 1588).
[130] Henry W. Robinson and Walter Adams (eds), *The Diary of Robert Hooke 1672-1680* (London, 1935), p. 5 (18 August 1672); p. 9 (6 October 1672, 10 October 1672); p. 12 (4 November 1672), p. 15 (30 November 1672); p. 19 (1 January 1673).
[131] Robinson and Adams (eds), *The Diary of Robert Hooke*, p. 15 (6 December 1672), p. 18 (27 December 1672)
[132] Chomel, *Dictionnaire oeconomique,* s.v. 'hearing'; s.v. 'deafness'.
[133] Markham, *The English Hus-wife,* ed. Best, p. 16.

Hill suggested the application of warmed wine infused with bruised herbs.[134] Another remedy for certain hearing impairments was to burn behind the ear with a red-hot iron, but such blistering only brought Hooke more pain.[135] Hooke did find temporary relief by singing to mask the noise in his head, but his tinnitus continued until August, when syringing did 'fetch out a core' of ear wax. Although claiming that this did not remove the 'noyse', Hooke made no record of his problem again for another eight months.[136] Many of the suggested cures were issued with a caveat that they might work only for deafness which was partial or which had appeared very suddenly. One author recommended the direct application of the juice of wild mint to alleviate symptoms in sufferers who had previously been able to hear.[137] James Mullins identified the curative properties of the cylonian plant, or ear-wort, suggesting both topical application and internal consumption, but acknowledged that it was most effective for intermittent deafness.[138] In 1728 marketers of 'specific Drops for Deafness' boasted that 'Hundreds who were so very bad, as not to be able to hear a Drum when beat close by Them, and therefore despair'd of being ever relieved, have been quickly and perfectly cured by them to their great Joy and Admiration.'[139]

By the eighteenth century, when remedial action failed, some could resort to a mechanical enhancement of sounds through the use of conical tubes which conducted sound. In experimenting with his 'speaking trumpet' Samuel Morland had discovered not only that it amplified the voice when held to the mouth, but 'by

---

[134] Thomas Hill, *The Arte of Gardening* (London, 1608), p. 52.
[135] Philip H. Beales, *Noise, Hearing and Deafness* (London, 1965), p. 16.
[136] Robinson and Adams (eds), *The Diary of Robert Hooke*, pp. 21-2 (13-14 January 1673); p. 26 (2-4 February 1673); p. 27 (7 February 1673); p. 39 (13 April 1673); p. 42 (8 May 1673); p. 54 (11 August 1673); p. 99 (27 April 1674).
[137] *The Compleat Servant-Maid; or, the Young Maidens Tutor* (London, 1677), p. 52.
[138] James Mullins, *Some observations upon the Cylonian plant. Shewing its virtues against deafness* (London, 1695), pp. 4-7.
[139] *The Whitehall Evening-Post*, no. 1473, 17-20 February 1728. My thanks to Natasha Glaisyer for pointing me to this reference.

laying one of these Instruments to the Ear, the Words are heard more distinctly'.[140] Ear trumpets (or, to Francis Bacon, 'ear-spectacles') were developed during the seventeenth century, yet they would have been well beyond the means of all but the wealthy.[141]

Some deafness was related to old age. To Elizabeth Delaval, daughter of Sir James Livingstone, 'gray haiers' and deafness were signs that a person 'has allready (as the usuall saying is) one foot in the grave.'[142] An Oxford bailiff was granted permission for non-attendance at council meetings in 1661 'in regard to his age and infirmities in want of sight and hearing'.[143] In the same year Pepys' sixty year old father's sight and hearing both suddenly declined.[144] In *The Pinder of Wakefield* a 'jest' is recalled, in which the landlord of an old deaf man pretended to drink to his tenant's health yet in his speech he honoured 'all the whores, Bawdes, Rogues and Cutpurses, in the whole Kingdome'. In doffing his hat and thanking his landlord the old man exposed himself to ridicule and when all the gentlemen in the tavern 'laughed heartily ... the poore man was abasht, not knowing what they laughed at'.[145] It would be tempting to conclude that this fictional incident might suggest a lack of respect for the elderly deaf, but it equally might merely be attributed to the old man's inferior status. Caricatures of old deaf men implied they were cantankerous.[146] Ben Jonson's Corbaccio, an old deaf gentleman duped

---

[140] Morland, *Tuba Stentoro-phonica*, p. 4.
[141] Francis Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum* (1627), in Bacon, *Works*, p. 435 (century III, 285). Ear trumpets were not available in England during Bacon's lifetime. After 1745 naturalist Gilbert White had an ear trumpet, R. Holt-White, *The Life and Letters of Gilbert White of Selbourne* (London, 1901), p. 39; By 1763 Monsieur de la Condamine relied on the use of a horn to hear, *Boswell's London Journal*, p. 250 (12 June 1763); According to Oliver Goldsmith's epitaph to him in *Retaliation: A Poem. Including Epitaphs on the Most Distinguished Wits of this Metropolis* (London, 1774), Sir Joshua Reynolds used a trumpet. See also Barry Dunn, 'Sir Joshua Reynold's Deafness', *Medical History*, 17 (1973), 66-8, p. 66.
[142] Greene (ed), *The Meditations of Elizabeth Delaval,* p. 76.
[143] Mary G. Hobson and Herbert Edward Salter (eds), *Oxford Council Acts, 1626-1665*, Oxford Historical Society, 95 (Oxford, 1933), p. 289.
[144] *Pepys*, II, p. 103 (19 May 1661).
[145] *The Pinder of Wakefield*, ed. Horsman, p. 59.
[146] See for example, *Boswell's London Journal*, p. 91 (17 December 1762).

fig. 3, Detail from William Hogarth, *The Cockpit* (1759). See fig. 12 for full image.

by Volpone, was depicted as miserly and joyless. Other characters need to shout to make themselves heard by him, and they mock him in quiet asides.[147] In William Hogarth's depiction of *The Cockpit* (1759), (fig. 3), a grumpy old man to the far left, who appears to be wearing clerical bands, holds an ear trumpet to his right ear, into which another person shouts. Communication by means of lip-reading and the vestiges of speech would have been difficult, but not impossible, for the adventitious deaf. In the early-seventeenth century poet and antiquary Richard Carew described Grisling, an elderly deaf man able to lip-read.[148]

Adventitious deafness would not necessarily have debarred a person from employment. Zacharias von Uffenbach was surprised to discover that the librarian of Westminster library 'did not only look like a chimney-sweep but was deaf' and additionally the deaf librarian could speak 'tolerable latin'.[149] In 1663 Pepys engaged Jane, a chamber maid who was hard of hearing. On the day of her arrival Pepys remarked 'she is only thick of hearing, which may be a trouble, but we know not yet, nor is it always so much as at other times.' Pepys mocked her when she recounted an anecdote 'like a fool and a dissembling fanatic ... so like a changeling, would make a man laugh to death almost and yet be vexed to hear her.' Jane seems to have coped fairly well in her position, and remained with the Pepys household for seven months.[150] The type of work and extent of deafness would influence whether deaf workers could continue when they lost their hearing. Naturalist Charles Butler admitted that his research on the sounds of bees was compromised when his hearing became impaired.[151] Payment of one shilling for a

---

[147] Ben Jonson, *Volpone or the Foxe* (1607), in Michael Jamieson (ed.), *Three Comedies of Ben Jonson* (Harmondsworth, 1966), I, iv, 6-7, 126-30.
[148] Richard Carew, *The Survey of Cornwall* (1602), ed. F.E. Halliday (London, 1969), p. 182. See also Lang, *Silence of the Spheres*, p. 9.
[149] W.H. Quarrell and Margaret Mare (eds and trans), *London in 1710 from the Travels of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach* (London, 1934), p. 75 (27 June 1710).
[150] *Pepys*, IV, p. 292 (31 August 1663); V, p. 71 (29 February 1664).
[151] L.C. Miall, *The Early Naturalists. Their Lives and Work (1580-1789)* (London 1912), p. 90; Charles Butler, *The Feminine Monarchie, or A treatise concerning bees, and the due ordering of*

'minister that was deafe' appears amongst the entries in the Lambeth churchwardens' accounts for 1633-4, suggesting that he was no longer able to perform his duties.[152]

It is likely that deafness, especially late-onset deafness which was not profound, would not have hindered the execution of many job tasks. Nicholas Mirzoeff has argued that in the early modern period, 'the simple binary opposition between the able-bodied and the disabled did not exist. Instead, the human body was perceived as inherently defective.[153] Some contemporaries believed that those lacking one sense would have enjoyed an enhancement of another sense in order to compensate.[154] Thomas Nashe thought that 'Blind men have better noses than other men' and Thomas Fuller included the proverb 'Deaf men are quick-ey'd and distrustful' in his collection.[155] Indeed, the deaf may have been thought better equipped for work which relied on visual skills than hearing people; for instance, many deaf people were considered to be gifted painters.[156]

Despite the fact that many deaf people were employed, they might still be vulnerable members of society. Cycely Stephenson and Margaret Warnes were two deaf spinners who appear in the Norwich census of the poor of 1570. Both women were in work, but neither was able to make a living wage. Warnes was described as 'a deff woman, that spin lynen' and as 'Veri pore'. Deafness was not

---

them (Oxford, 1609), chapter 5, sections 22-30, sigs F3r-v.

[152] Charles Drew (ed.), *Lambeth Churchwardens' Accounts 1504-1645 and Vestry Book 1610*, Surrey Record Society, 2 vols (18 and 20) (London, 1941-2), II, p. 91.

[153] Nicholas Mirzoeff, *Bodyscape, Art, Modernity and the ideal figure* (London, 1995), p. 40.

[154] *The Spectator*, no. 4 [Steele] 5 March 1711, 'It is remarkable, that those who want any one Sense, possess the others with greater Force and Vivacity.'

[155] Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller*, in Nashe, *Works*, II, p. 221; Fuller, *Gnomologia,* p. 47, no. 1242.

[156] Mirzoeff, 'Signs and Citizens', pp. 272-5; Nicholas Mirzoeff, *Silent Poetry. Deafness, sign, and visual culture in modern France* (Princeton, 1995), pp. 27-8; Dunn, 'Sir Joshua Reynold's Deafness', pp. 66-8.

necessarily the chief factor in creating the poverty of these women, but their condition was obviously considered relevant by those describing their poverty.[157]

The lot of the adventitiously deaf was not necessarily a miserable one. Many worked, many married and had families and most would have coped with their condition. It is difficult to ascertain exactly how deaf people felt about their condition, as they left few personal records, but it may be assumed that deafness which came late in life was not necessarily a great social disadvantage.

The prelingually deaf

Prelingual deafness was a great handicap in early modern England, and the majority of those born deaf would have remained 'mute' or 'dumb' for their entire lives.[158] Orality allowed people to participate actively in society, allowing them to assimilate and communicate ideas. Most prelingually deaf people could not enjoy this two-way communication, and one sign language tutor remarked that the prelingually deaf were divorced from all 'verball contrivances of man's invention'.[159] Randle Holme noticed that the prelingually deaf are not silent; 'Dumb, is not to speak at all, but to make a muttering and a blathering noise.'[160] Johann Amman remarked that the deaf already used a rudimentary language of sounds to express the 'chief Motions of the Mind, by the Voice which is to an Observant Hearer, various, yea, they hardly ever signifie any thing by Signs, but they mix with it some Sound or Voice.'[161]

---

[157] John F. Pound (ed.), *The Norwich Census of the Poor 1570*, Norfolk Record Society, 40 (Norwich, 1971), pp. 56, 84.
[158] Muteness might also be caused by tongue or psychological disorders. In some of the examples used in this discussion it is not apparent whether a 'dumb' or 'mute' person was also deaf.
[159] John Bulwer, *Philocophus: or, the Deafe and Dumbe Mans Friend* (London, 1648), sigs A3-A4.
[160] Randle Holme, *The Academy of Armory, or, A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon*, 3 parts (Chester, 1688), II, p. 389. George Sibscota remarked that the prelingually deaf 'make use of a Voice, but not of Speech', in *The Deaf and Dumb Man's Discourse. Or A Treatise concerning those that are Born Deaf and Dumb, containing a Discovery of their Knowledge or Understanding* (London, 1670), p. 5.
[161] Johann Conrad Amman, *The Talking Deafman*, trans. Daniel Foot (London, 1694), p. 7.

References to encounters with deaf people in diaries and literature suggest that they managed to communicate crudely with strangers and elaborately with close intimates, through improvised languages composed of signs and gestures. As employment of sign language was infrequently recorded, it is difficult to judge the prevalence of its use. William Holder, keen to develop education for the deaf noticed that 'Dumb persons are sagacious' in the use of 'significant Expressions' such as 'Knocking, Beckoning, Frowning, Pointing and the like' in order to communicate with others.[162] Richard Steele maintained that when conversing with the 'dumb', you can gauge their opinions by 'the Turn of their Eyes, and the Changes of their Countenance'.[163] Richard Carew's history of Cornwall includes an account of Edward Bone, a servant of Cornish MP Peter Courtenay who was 'deaf from his cradle and consequently dumb' yet was able to learn news and pass it on to his master by 'very effectual Signs, being able there through to receive and perform any enjoined errand.' Bone lived near to Kempe, another deaf man, and when these two met they communicated through 'such strange, often and earnest tokenings, and such hearty laughters and other passionate gestures, that their want of a tongue seemed rather an hindrance to others conceiving them then to their conceiving one another'.[164] Bone was known to modify the complexity of his signing depending on the skill of the person with whom he was communicating.[165] Interaction between the deaf and the hearing might have been strained and awkward. In 1666 Pepys witnessed the communication a of 'Dumb boy', but found his 'strange signs' difficult to understand. Captain Downing, interpreting the signs, explained to Pepys that with a little experience the boy's language could be deciphered easily.[166] Seventeenth century Dutch voice expert Johann Amman

---

[162] Holder, *Elements of Speech*, p. 5.
[163] *The Spectator,* no. 4 [Steele] 5 March 1711.
[164] Carew, *Survey of Cornwall*, ed. Halliday, p. 214-15.
[165] extract in Brian Grant (ed.), *The Quiet Ear. Deafness in Literature* (London, 1987), p. 63.
[166] *Pepys*, VII, p. 363 (9 November 1666).

noted that even those who had mastered sign language found communicating difficult, remarking 'But alas! How miserable is the condition of the Deaf? How lame and defective is that Speach, which is performed by Signs and Gestures?'[167]

The tendency to equate speech with intelligence was an ancient one; it was speech that separated man from beast.[168] There could be no thought without words and no words without speech. A child born deaf would not develop speech, and consequently the 'deaf and dumb' were considered to be unable to think, and to express only base emotions.[169] They were thought less intelligent that the rest of the population and dumb became a pejorative term.[170] That the prelingually deaf did not develop an intelligible oral language led Samuel Johnson to label their condition as a calamity.[171]

The inability to hear and speak had implications for a person's legal rights and responsibilities. To aid their assessment of mental competence, justices could refer to handbooks which embodied a dichotomy between 'idiot' and 'lunatick' which had been in place since the thirteenth century. Michael Dalton identified three types of people classifiable as *non compos mentis*, and most prelingually deaf would had been categorised under the first category: 'A fool natural, who is so (*à nativitate*) from his birth; and in such a one there is no hope of recovery.' Dalton added that if a 'man born deaf and dumb' killed a person 'that is no Felony; for he

---

[167] Amman, *The Talking Deafman*, sigs A1-A2.
[168] For a discussion of Aristotle's views on this matter see Sibscota, *The Deaf and Dumb Man's Discourse,* pp. 3-4, 48-50.
[169] Paul C. Higgins, *Outsiders in a Hearing World: a sociology of deafness* (Beverley Hills, 1980), pp. 23-4; Rée, *I See a Voice*, pp. 85-7; George Devereux, 'Ethnophysical Aspects of the Terms "Deaf" and "Dumb"', in David Howes (ed.), *The Varieties of Sensory Experience. A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses* (Toronto, 1991), pp. 43-6.
[170] Constance Classen traces the history of the words 'deaf' and 'dumb' in *Worlds of Sense. Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures* (London, 1993), pp. 64-5. See also Hallowell Davis and S. Richard Silverman *Hearing and Deafness*, 3rd edn (New York, 1970), p. 422.
[171] Holder, *Elements of Speech*, p. 110; Sibscota, *The Deaf and Dumb Man's Discourse*, p. 1. See also Samuel Johnson's views in Kenneth W. Hodgson *The Deaf and their Problems. A Study in Special Education* (London, 1953), p. 59.

cannot know whether he did evil or no'.[172] In the early-eighteenth century Matthew Hale spelt out the long accepted view of the legal status of the prelingually deaf;

> A man, that is *surdis* (deaf) & *mutus* (dumb) a *nativitate* (from birth), is in presumption of law an ideot, and the rather, because he hath no possibility to understand, what is forbidden by law to be done, or under what penalties.

Hale also noted that the assessment of legal rights and responsibilities was not necessarily clear cut; a congenitally deaf person could be regarded as responsible in law 'if it can appear, that he hath the use of understanding, which many of that condition discover by signs to a very great measure, then he may be tried, and suffer judgment and execution, tho great caution is to be used therein.'[173] Hale also considered the competence of the congenitally deaf to be arraigned, adding in a note that if a prisoner remained mute when asked to plead they would be asked whether their silence was wilful or was caused by an Act of God. If a person could show that 'by signs ... he hath the use of understanding' then the proceedings could continue, through the translations of someone who comprehended their signs, and could sign meanings to them.[174]

The legal implications of being defined as an 'idiot' could be grave, and could extend to a denial of property rights. Under medieval law the prelingually deaf were denied the right of primogeniture.[175] A proverb collected in 1678

---

[172] Michael Dalton, *The Countrey Justice. Containing the Practise of the Justices of the Peace As well in as out of their Sessions*, enlarged edn (London, 1666), p. 284. See also William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4th edn, 4 vols (London, 1769-70), IV, p. 25; I, pp. 292-3. For a wider discussion of 'idiocy' see Peter Rushton, 'Idiocy, the family and the community in early modern north-east England', in David Wright and Anne Digby (eds), *From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency. Historical Perspectives on people with learning disabilities* (London, 1996), pp. 46-9.

[173] Matthew Hale, *Historia Placitorum Coronae. The History of the Pleas of the Crown*, 2 vols (London, 1736), I, p. 34; William Holdsworth described the labelling of the deaf and dumb as 'idiots' as a 'rebuttable presumption' in law until the nineteenth century in, *A History of English Law,* 17 vols (London, 1903-72), IX, pp. 187-8.

[174] Hale, *Pleas of the Crown*, I, p. 34. See also Nigel Walker, *Crime and Insanity in England. The Historical Perspective* (Edinburgh, 1968), p. 220.

[175] Davis and Silverman, *Hearing and Deafness*, p. 422. See also Harlan Lane, *When the Mind*

captured this inability to inherit property; 'A dumb Man never gets Land', and this appeared in a slightly different form in an eighteenth-century collection; 'Dumb Folks get no Land'.[176] However, the situation was more ambiguous. Henry Swinburne, when considering the types of people unfit to make a will decided that if a person was born deaf and was 'dumb', they could not make a will 'unless it do appear by sufficient arguments that he understandeth what a Testament meaneth ... [then] he may by signs and tokens declare his Testament'.[177]

Prelingually deaf people were not devoid of work opportunities. Two Nottingham men each apprenticed a 'dumbe boy' in 1632.[178] However, many were dependant on family members or the wider community for their subsistence. How a prelingually deaf person was treated would have depended on their personal circumstances, and a crucial variable would have been the ability of their immediate family to provide financial, practical and emotional support. In 1642 Giles Blunt, a Worcestershire man, sought relief from maintenance payments to the estranged wife and three children of his 'deaf and dumb' son George. Whilst Blunt accepted a responsibility to maintain his son, he argued that the marriage might be questionable, as George could not understand the concept of marriage, and should, therefore, be excused from its concomitant duties. Writing to the justices of Worcester on his behalf, a judge of the King's Bench entreated them to 'examine the marriage and send for the Minster who married them and those who were by and the parties and find out whether he understood what he did when he joyned hands with the woman'.[179] Clement Comby petitioned the Warwick county

---

Hears. A History of the Deaf (New York, 1984), p. 93.

[176] John Ray, *A Collection of English Proverbs*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1678), p. 130; Fuller, *Gnomologia*, p. 47, no. 1243; p. 51, no. 1347.

[177] Henry Swinburne, *A Treatise of Testaments and last Wills*, 4th edn (London, 1677), p. 63.

[178] Everard Leaver Guilford (ed.), *Extracts from the Records of the Borough of Nottingham* [1620s and 1630s], Transactions of the Thoroton Society, 30 (Nottingham,1926), 108-36, pp. 126, 133.

[179] J.W. Willis Bund (ed.), *Calendar of the Quarter Sessions Papers, 1591-1643*, Worcestershire Historical Society, 11 (Worcester, 1900), p. 701 - Letter from Mr Justice Heath to Mr Nanfam and Mr Townshend, Justices of Peace for Worcester (1642).

justices in 1671 on behalf of his 'deaf and dumb' brother Nicholas. It was noted that Nicholas was 'now fallen into much want and penury, his mother who was want to relieve him being lately dead and ... being destitute of an habitation and very sick and not able to maintain himself'. The justices ruled that care should be provided by the overseers of the poor until his case was reviewed.[180]

These two cases show how the duty of care often fell to parents, and the latter reveals the vulnerability which could follow the death of the primary carer. Comby was forced to seek care from the community, but some communities abrogated their responsibility. In 1689 petitioners from Nelston argued that Susanna Shaw, a poor 'deaf and dumb' woman, should be settled in Rugby, to alleviate the financial burden she placed on their community.[181] Such reluctance might have been especially apparent in cases where it seemed that care would need to be maintained for a long period of time - such as for the care of young prelingually deaf people.[182]

Some prelingually deaf were forced to beg. Amongst the cases listed in the Norwich poor census of 1570 is that of 'dombe Elizabeth, that worketh nott, but begg contynuallye.'[183] Indeed, pretending to be dumb when begging was sufficiently common in the period for the label 'dommerar' to be coined. Thomas Harman, a describer of roguery, claimed that the 'dommerar ... with a marvelous force wyll hold downe their toungs doubled, groning for your charyty'.[184] Some

---

[180] S.C. Ratcliff and H.C. Johnson (eds), *Quarter Sessions Orders 1665-1674*, Warwick County Records, 5 (Warwick, 1939), p. 173.
[181] H.C. Johnson (ed.), *Quarter Sessions Records 1682-1690*, Warwick County Records, 8 (Warwick, 1953), pp. 261-2.
[182] See Rushton, 'Idiocy in early modern north-east England', p. 56.
[183] Pound (ed.), *The Norwich Census of the Poor*, p. 51; See also *The Diary of Thomas Isham*, p. 151 (8 September 1672).
[184] Thomas Harman, *A Caveat or Warening for Commen Cursetors vulgarley called vagabones* (1567) repr. in E. Viles and F.J. Furnivall (eds), *A Caveat or Warening for Common Cursetors vulgarely called Vagabonds*, Early English Text Society, extra ser., 9 (London, 1869), pp. 57-9. For a consideration of Harman's views see A.L. Beier, *Masterless Men. The vagrancy problem in England 1560-1640* (London, 1985), pp. 7-8, and Gamini Salgado, *The Elizabethan Underworld* (1977), repr. edn (Stroud, 1992), pp. 119-25.

justices might have regarded physical disability sceptically, as according to Peter Rushton, 'too many vagrants had pretended to be "dumb".'[185]

The numerous contemporary assertions that prelingual deafness was calamitous obscures the variety of experiences.[186] Crucial factors which determined individual circumstances were the era into which deaf people were born, their familial wealth and status, and the size of their community. The plight of the nine year old son a Norwich Butcher, who in 1570 was described as 'both lame & dome, & a miserable person', would have little in common with the Countess of Orkney, born deaf into wealth in the early-eighteenth century.[187] Deaf children born to wealthy families after the mid-seventeenth century would have been more likely to enjoy the benefits of specialist education than children of more humble origin.[188] The ability to read, write, or sign effectively would have enhanced the legal status of a prelingually deaf person. Indeed, the flexibility of the legal guidelines placed them in a strange position; whilst they were categorised as 'idiots' due to a congenital deformity, their status could change if they were able to give evidence of comprehension and an ability to communicate. Once some form of intelligible language was mastered a person could inherit and pass on property. The first known will of a prelingually deaf person was written in 1672 by Framlingham Gaudy, a man born into a wealthy Norfolk family.[189]

---

[185] Rushton, 'Idiocy in early modern north-east England', p. 58.

[186] Holder, *Elements of Speech*, p. 110; Sibscota, *The Deaf and Dumb Man's Discourse*, p. 1. Hodgson *The Deaf and their Problems*, p. 59. It should be noted that many making such assertions did so in the context of their promotion of new tuition techniques for the deaf and dumb.

[187] Pound (ed.), *The Norwich Census of the Poor*, p. 37; Sir Bernard Burke, *The Romance of the Aristocracy: or Anecdotes and Records of Distinguished Families*, 3 vols (London, 1855), II, p. 244.

[188] John Bulwer wrote, *The Chirologia, or the Natural Language of the Hand* (London 1644) and *Philocophus: or, the Deafe and Dumbe Mans Friend* (London, 1648), essentially about the use of sign language for the deaf and dumb, and also detailing 'Lip-Grammar' (lip-reading). For valuable analyses of this and similar texts see also Rée, *I See a Voice*, pp. 97-140; R. Conrad and Barbara C. Weiskrantz, 'Deafness in the seventeenth century: Into Empiricism' *Sign Language Studies*, 45 (1984), 291-399; Oliver Sacks, *Seeing Voices: a Journey into the World of the Deaf* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 14.

[189] Gaudy's will is reproduced in Peter W. Jackson, *Britain's Deaf Heritage* (Edinburgh, 1990), opposite p. 1, and discussed on pp. 15-16. An attachment to the will reads 'These instructions for a

The opportunities for the aristocratic prelingually deaf seemed to be little hampered by their disability. Prelingually deaf aristocrat, Sir Joseph Gaudy, elder brother of Framlingham, was reputed to be a fine painter, and Evelyn described him as 'a very handsome person, but quite *dumb*: yet very intelligent by signes ... so civil, & well bred he was, as it was not possible to discerne any imperfection by him'.[190] John Bulwer dedicated *Philocophus* (1648), a book about sign language, to Sir Edward Gostwicke who succeeded to a baronetcy in 1630 and his younger brother William, and to 'all other intelligent and ingeneous Gentlemen, who as yet can neither heare nor speak.'[191]

Sir Bernard Burke described the moment when the Countess of Orkney, herself deaf from birth, discovered that her child could hear. She threw a stone on the floor next to the sleeping baby, and the noise of impact woke the child. The Countess was relieved, but her maid misinterpreted the act, as 'like all persons of the lowest order in her country, indeed in most countries, was fully impressed with the idea of the peculiar cunning and malignity of "dumbies"' and was convinced that the Countess was planning to dash the child's head with the stone.[192] There were not only class differences in the experience of prelingual deafness, but also, seemingly, by the mid-eighteenth century there were also class differences in attitudes to the prelingually deaf.

Deaf children born to poor families would have had menial jobs and might have become destitute, especially if they had become reliant on a particular family member who subsequently died. The degree of isolation felt by deaf people might have been affected by the size of the community in which they dwelt and the

---

Will were written with the proper handwriting of the said Framlingham Gaudy, who is a person both deafe and dumbe'.

[190] *Evelyn*, IV, p. 113 (2 September 1677).

[191] Bulwer, *Philocophus*, sig A3; see also Jeffrey Wollock, 'John Bulwer's (1606-1656) place in the history of the deaf', in *Historiographia Linguistica*, 23 (1996), 1-46.

[192] Burke, *Romance of the Aristocracy*, II, p. 244. The Countess married Murrough, the first Marquis of Thomond in 1753, 'by signs'.

degree of geographical mobility that they enjoyed. In large cities opportunities both to meet other deaf people and to develop literacy skills would have been higher than in small villages.[193] Reactions of hearing people to the deaf were mixed, and in part would have depended on the degree of contact they had with them. Some pitied them, some distrusted them, some were confused by their signs and some were bored by them (Dorothy Osborne, daughter of Sir Peter Osborne, after spending time with William and Edward Gostwicke complained that they had 'made such a tedious visit, and I am tired of making signs and tokens for everything I had to say').[194] Yet, despite occasional attempts by petitioners to settle destitute deaf people in other communities, the prelingually deaf were not ostracised or institutionalised, but were considered to be part of society.[195] The situation of the prelingually deaf would have changed during the early modern period. Although society remained predominantly an oral one, by 1760 opportunities for literacy had increased, and it is likely that by then more prelingually deaf people would have been taught some form of literacy than in 1560, especially in urban settlements.[196]

With hearing becoming established as a key sense in religious practice, one might assume that the salvation of the deaf would have appeared remote in the early modern period. A distinction was made in the bible; 'He that *hath an ear*, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches'.[197] William Gouge explained that a victim of the punishment of ear-lopping, often applied to those convicted of sedition, might become unable to hear the word of God, and would therefore be

---

[193] See Lennard J. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy. Disability, Deafness and the Body* (London, 1995), pp. 51-2.
[194] Jackson, *Britain's Deaf Heritage*, p. 6.
[195] Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy*, p. 3.
[196] David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order; Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1980); David Vincent, *Literacy and popular culture. England 1750-1914*, Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture, 19 (Cambridge, 1989).
[197] *The Bible. Authorized King James Version with Apocrypha* (Oxford, 1997), p. 303 [Rev. 3:22], my emphasis.

vulnerable.[198] However, neither William Harrison nor Daniel Burgess explored the implications of their remarks for the prelingually deaf. At the close of the seventeenth century a Dutch specialist in vocal disorders made an explicit connection, writing 'How little are they capable to receive of those things which concern their eternal Salvation? Who doth not commiserate with this sort of Persons?'[199] George Sibscota considered the salvation of the deaf and dumb in 1670, pondering that if *'Faith comes by Hearing* ... it may possibly seem very agreeable to truth, that there can be no Faith, and therefore no saving Knowledge [for the deaf and dumb]; and the consequence is undeniable, since no man can ever be saved without Faith.' He thought this conclusion manifestly unfair, and, after muttering about God working in mysterious ways, wondered if the deaf might gain salvation through 'diligent reading'.[200] According to John Williams, the Bishop of Lincoln, Sir Edward Gostwicke, was a 'sweet creature of rare perspicuity of nature whose behaviour, gestures and zealous signs have procured and allowed him admittance to sermons, prayers, the Lords Supper'.[201] However, can we assume, given the silence on the matter, that in post-Reformation England the salvation of the illiterate deaf was considered remote?

The predicament of the profoundly deaf in a society in which sounds were vested as a key means of interacting with others is interesting. A modern sociologist of deafness maintains that the deaf live in a world of sounds, which is controlled by those who hear, yet they are not fully integrated into that world - they are 'outsiders in a hearing world', and to some extent this was also true of the

---

[198] In his preface to Egerton's *Boring of the eare*, William Gouge stressed the importance of hearing the Word of God correctly.
[199] Amman, *The Talking Deafman*, sigs A1-A2.
[200] Sibscota, *The Deaf and Dumb Man's Discourse*, pp. 36-9.
[201] John Hacket, *Scrinia Reserata: a memorial offer'd to the great deservings of J. Williams*, 2 vols (London, 1692), II, p. 61; William Page (ed.) *Victoria County History - Bedford*, 3 vols (London, 1912), III, pp. 203, 264.

early modern period.[202] The following chapters will explore this hearing world, examining the various ways of using and perceiving sounds to which the deaf were not privy.

[202] Higgins, *Outsiders in a Hearing World*, p. 22.

CHAPTER 3 - LAUGH BEFORE BREAKFAST, YOU'LL CRY BEFORE SUPPER: MAKING NONVERBAL SOUNDS

Human communication is not conducted through words alone, but includes nonverbal and nonvocal sounds and gestures. Sounds such as crying, groaning, moaning, sighing, yawning, coughing, spitting, clapping, hissing, belching, giggling, chuckling, farting, finger-snapping, teeth-gnashing, sneezing, sniffing and snivelling are the concern of this chapter.[1] These sounds are complementary to verbal communication, and like verbal communication, the ability to communicate through such sounds is governed by the context of the situation and by individual skill. The way an early modern person utilised his or her ability to communicate in this way could have revealed much about their personality. The use of these sounds was also subject to shifts in meaning over time.

Different sounds served different purposes. Sounds could introduce, punctuate, confirm, emphasise, contradict, show contempt, mock, demarcate personal space, and reveal or conceal nuances of emotion. In *Elements of Speech* (1669) William Holder noted that 'Common life is full of this kind of significant Expressions', and compared the simple sounds made by humans to the language of 'Brute Animals' who make sounds 'to Call, Warne, Chide, Cherish, Threaten, etc.'[2] As shown in the last chapter, even the prelingually deaf were known to communicate their feelings with simple sounds, and according to Johann Amman they would 'Laugh, Cry out, Hollow, Weep, Sigh and Waile' and make sounds

---

[1] In the next chapter sounds of illness and bodily disorder, such as coughing and hiccuping will be considered as symptoms of illness. For this chapter the context in which such sounds were heard or made which is focused upon, and attempts to suppress or exaggerate them are examined. For the distinction between reactions to pain and behaviour see Alfred Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, trans. George Walsh and Frederick Lehnert (Evanston, Ill., 1967), pp. 53-7. Leanne Hinton, Johanna Nichols and John J. Ohala, 'Introduction: Sound symbolic processes' in Leanne Hinton, Johanna Nichols and John J. Ohala (eds) *Sound Symbolism* (Cambridge, 1994), esp. p. 2.

[2] William Holder, *Elements of Speech: An Essay of Inquiry into The Natural Production of Letters: with An Appendix Concerning Persons Deaf and Dumb* (London, 1669), p. 5.

which 'rejoyceth', exclaim and show indignation, anger and commiseration, 'not to mention many such other-like.'[3] In order to communicate through sounds there must be a degree of consensus about their meaning, yet although some sounds were convenient substitutes for explicable sentiments, others expressed feelings for which words did not exist. A lovesick Dudley Ryder recognised this when he wrote 'I cannot tell how to express my sentiments and what I feel, so that I express it more by dismal melancholy looks and broken sighs and accents than in any continued discourse.'[4]

For the first part of the following discussion, which is descriptive rather than analytical, human sounds are divided into two loose categories: firstly contentment and approval, then sadness, grief, discontent and disapproval. After a brief review of the impropriety of sounds in certain contexts, I will focus more closely on early modern notions of laughter and crying. The conclusion considers the role of sounds in the formation of personality.

Sounds of contentment and approval

Proverbial wisdom reminded that '[t]here belongs more then whistling to going to the plow', and to early modern commentators the sound of whistling frequently evoked images of contented rural labouring and the whistling man was depicted as innocent, busy, toiling and close to the soil.[5] The Venetian merchant Alessandro Magno visited London in 1562 and saw the hinterland carters 'go whistling' behind their horses.[6] Devon minister John Flavell portrayed an image of

---

[3] Johann Conrad Amman, *The Talking Deafman*, trans. Daniel Foot (London, 1694), pp. 7-8.
[4] *Dudley Ryder*, p. 296 (15 August 1716).
[5] John Ray, *A Collection of English Proverbs*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1678), p. 191; Thomas Nashe, *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1600) in Nashe, *Works*, III, p. 247; John Gay, *Rural Sports, a Poem* (London, 1713), p. 53; John Gay, *The Shepherd's Week* (1714), in John Underhill (ed.), *The Poetical Works of John Gay*, 2 vols (London, 1893), I, p. 99.
[6] C. Barron, C. Coleman and C. Gobbi (eds.), 'The London Journal of Alessandro Magno 1562', *The London Journal*, 9 (1983), 136-52, p. 147; 'You'll make an end to your Whistle, tho' the Cart overthrow for it', appears in Thomas Fuller, *Gnomologia: Adagies and Proverbs, Wise Sentences*

industriousness when he described the sound of the plowman who 'sings and whistles though he sweat' and surgeon James Yonge was struck by the shepherds of the Salisbury Plain in 1681, noting 'I heard them whistle and sing very merrily, poor souls, no care or sorrow goes to their heads, and they are so mean and ignorant, so indigent and solitary'.[7]

Sounds made to express approval for the actions of others were not necessarily loud. Pepys' colleague William Coventry referred to the 'hum' of approval he received for a parliamentary speech.[8] However, the majority of the comments made by diarists and travellers focus on loud and more overt displays of approval. Hand-clapping, foot-stomping, hurrahing and huzzaing were the sounds of a happy crowd. The cheers and applause of audiences indicated a sense of communal unity and displayed approval, respect or deference. James Yonge described celebrations for the coronation of Queen Anne in 1702 when the folk of Honiton marched through the town from ten o'clock in the morning until nine at night 'hurraing every now and then.'[9] The feeling of being in a joyful crowd, united in one experience might have had a profound effect on the gathered individuals and such displays of communal approval might have dispelled tensions and channelled feelings. Dudley Ryder was pleased to hear the mob's joyous 'holloing' for King George noting that the 'streets rang with huzzas' when he attended a procession in October 1715.[10]

In the theatre the intensity of audience approval could be demonstrated by particularly loud or prolonged applause.[11] Zacarias Conrad von Uffenbach

---

and Witty Sayings, Ancient and Modern, Foreign and British (London, 1732), p. 266, no. 6027.

[7] John Flavell, *Husbandry Spiritualized; or the Heavenly use of Earthly Things* (London, 1669), p. 31, 'The plowman sings and whistles though he sweat'. F.N.L. Poynter (ed.), *The Journal of James Yonge [1647-1721] - Plymouth Surgeon* (London, 1936), p. 167.

[8] *Pepys*, VII, p. 307 (4 October 1666).

[9] Poynter (ed.), *The Journal of James Yonge*, p. 210 (23 April 1702).

[10] *Dudley Ryder*, p. 121 (20 October 1715); see also p. 100 (17 September 1715).

[11] *Boswell's London Journal*, p. 66 (1 December 1762); Donald Lupton, *London and the Countrey Carbonadoed and Quartered into Severall Characters* (London, 1632), p. 81.

recorded the reaction to a passage in a play when 'there was such clapping that the actors were unable to proceed for nearly a quarter of an hour.'[12] A roar of spontaneous applause would indicate sentiments more deeply felt than a slow rhythmical polite clapping. Boswell was thrilled by the 'thunder of applause' which greeted his argument in a debate about the excise in 1763.[13] If a comedy did not cause the audience, or significant members of the audience, to laugh, it would be deemed a failure.[14]

Sounds of despair and disapproval

Sounds could also express sadness and despair. Sighs were associated with religious torment, grief, and unrequited love. A sigh indicated a troubled mind or a diseased body.[15] John Bunyan described the 'grievous sigh' he made when he felt worthless.[16] Among the 'Voices of a Man' listed by Randle Holme appears 'A Suspiration, or sighing, that is, when he is Sad'.[17] Sighs of unrequited lovers resonate in romantic passages penned by early modern authors and diarists.[18] Anne Halkett issued a 'sad sigh' when her love life became complicated.[19]

Disapproval, irritation, dislike and ridicule could all be displayed through sounds. Ill-favoured plays and players were barraged with hisses and boos and

---

[12] W.H. Quarrell and Margaret Mare (eds and trans), *London in 1710 from the Travels of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach* (London, 1934), p. 139 (24 July 1710). Uffenbach was perplexed when the audience of *The Fair Quaker of Deal* clapped for a long time after hearing a song sung by a person astride a horse dressed as a mountebank or gypsy, p. 30 (13 June 1710).
[13] *Boswell's London Journal*, p. 289 (25 July 1763).
[14] *Pepys*, IX, p. 203 (18 May 1668), see also the editors' footnote to this entry.
[15] Nathaniel Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum: or a more compleat universal etymological English dictionary than any extant* (London, 1736) s.v. 'sigh'.
[16] John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, ed. Roger Sharrock (Oxford, 1962), p. 59.
[17] Randle Holme, *The Academy of Armory, or, A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon*, 3 parts (Chester, 1688), III, p. 389.
[18] Edward Phillips, *The Mysteries of Love and Eloquence: or the Arts of Wooing or Complementing* (London, 1658), sigs A7v-A8v, Y2v; Ned Ward, *The London-Spy, Compleat, In Eighteen Parts* (orig. publ. 1698-1700), 4th edn (1709), repr. by Paul Hyland (East Lansing, Mich., 1993), p. 139; *The Spectator*, no. 30 [Steele] 4 April 1711.
[19] John Gough Nichols (ed.), *The Autobiography of Anne Lady Halkett*, The Camden Society, new ser., 13 (London, 1875), pp. 12-13.

such aggressive behaviour is explored in greater detail in Chapter 6. Huffing, puffing, tutting and tushing indicated annoyance, dissatisfaction, exasperation or impatience. The huffing and puffing of the tantrum were evidence of a short temper and to contemporary commentators these sounds were characteristically female.[20] Daniel Defoe advised maids accused of stealing from their mistress to be careful of their words, else the Madam 'huffs and flings about at a Strange Rate'.[21] Laughter was not simply a sound reserved to express amusement at comical expressions or activities, but could also be used to show contempt and disdain. To Alexander Pope this distinction was dependent on the object of the laughter and the company in which laughter was made - 'those that are my friends, I *laugh with*, and those that are not I *laugh at*'.[22] Scornful laughter was used to ridicule people. In *Leviathan* (1651) Thomas Hobbes argued that laughter is supercilious and derives from a sense of superiority. Laughers sought self-elevation at the expense of those they belittled, since laughter is caused 'by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves ... much Laughter at the defects of others, is a signe of Pusillanimity.'[23] Although not novel, such opinions had not been expressed so stridently before. References in travel accounts, diaries, autobiographies, and sermons show that Hobbes' view was commonly held; that laughter could be used to put another person down. Thomas Raymond recounted a story about how Charles I laughed at a fat man who could not keep pace with him when walking down the stairs 'puffing and blowing very much which made the King laugh heartily'.[24] Reflecting the view that it could ridicule, or be used to cruel effect,

---

[20] *Pepys*, VIII, p. 366 (29 July 1667).
[21] Daniel Defoe, *Every-body's business is no-body's business* (London, 1725), p. 11.
[22] Cited by S.M. Tave, *The Amiable Humorist. A Study of the Comic theory and criticism of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries* (Chicago, 1960), p. 54.
[23] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651) ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge, 1996), p. 43; Richard Allestree[?], *The Government of Tongue* (Oxford, 1674), p. 121.
[24] Godfrey Davies (ed.), *The Autobiography of Thomas Raymond and memoirs of the family of Guise*

Edward Philips chose the following epithets for laughter; 'Lowd, side holding, loose, shrill, wanton, sawcy, disordered, fawning, silly, ignorant, unseasoned, unruly, fleering, sneering, noisefull, disturbing.' These associated words suggest that Phillips believed laughter to be neither a good nor a beneficial activity.[25]

In the mid-seventeenth century Thomas Fuller noted that 'It is unnaturall to laugh at a Naturall [fool]', asking 'How can the object of thy pity be the subject of thy pastime?' He also argued that people should refrain from scoffing at natural and unchangeable defects, adding 'Mock not a professional Cobler for his black thumbes.'[26] Similar appeals to desist from scornful or derisive laughter appeared frequently from the late-seventeenth century onwards.[27] In *The Gentleman's Companion* (1672) William Ramesey denounced the abusive employment of laughter to injure, slur or affront another person.[28] In his essays, published in 1750, the philosopher Francis Hutcheson acknowledged the merit of using laughter selectively to criticise other people's faults, but warned that such a tool would be dangerous in the hands of the weak, adding the caveat that such laughter must be used only to reform 'little indecencies', and not to ridicule irreversible facts of nature. Hutcheson sought to remind people of the inherent kindness that characterises mankind, rejecting Hobbes' understanding of laughter as a token of arrogance. He suggested that Hobbes' misanthropic view resulted from a failure to distinguish between laughter and ridicule, when in fact ridicule is only one cause of laughter. There are, Hutcheson reminded his readers, 'innumerable other instances' where the intention of laughter is not to belittle.[29]

---

of Elmore, Gloucestershire, Camden Society, 3rd ser., 28 (London, 1917), p. 29.
[25] Phillips, *Mysteries of Love and Eloquence*, sig. X2.
[26] Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State and the Profane State* (Cambridge, 1642), ed. M. Graff Walten, 2 vols (New York, 1938), II, pp. 156, 180.
[27] For example John Angier, *An Helpe to Better Hearts for Better Times* (London, 1647), p. 85.
[28] William Ramesey, *The Gentleman's Companion: or, A Character of True Nobility and Gentility: In the way of Essay* (London, 1672), p. 172 [numbers 170-9 are repeated; this is the second p. 172]
[29] Francis Hutcheson, *Reflections upon Laughter, and Remarks Upon the Fable of the Bees* (Glasgow, 1750), pp. 6, 13, 34-6.

A civilizing process?

Much of the commentary about laughter in surviving conduct books from the mid-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century concerned its situational propriety. On formal occasions, Hugh Rhodes urged his readers to 'Laugh not too much at the Table'.[30] A nonconformist minister railed against laughter during worship, which he claimed showed disrespect for the gravity of the assembly and suggested that the laugher is having 'fleighty' thoughts.[31] In 1622 the churchwardens of the West Sussex village of Nuthurst presented Thomas Pearson for, amongst other misdemeanours, 'sometyme laughing in the tyme of servise and sermon'.[32]

Sounds were bound by particular cultural rules, and in some contexts it would have been necessary to stifle bodily sounds in order to behave politely.[33] In some situations, especially formal ones (in church, at a formal dinner or in the schoolroom, for example) rules of decorum demanded a polite suppression of body sounds. These conditions were detailed in contemporary conduct and courtesy books, which were predicated on an understanding that human sounds are, to some degree, controllable, but that some sounds escape involuntarily. Many conduct advisers suggested that impolite sounds should be masked, or excused and attempts to disguise or stifle them indicated deference to expected behaviour.

With reference to such works, the sociologist Norbert Elias gathered evidence of a slow transformation of behaviour during the early modern period. Elias claimed to detect a slow, linear development of 'civility' across Europe, as

---

[30] Hugh Rhodes, *The Boke of Nurture, or schoole of good maners: for Men, Servauntes, and Chyldren, with Stans Puer ad Mensam*, edn of 1577 repr. in *The Babees Book*, p. 81.
[31] Angier, *An Helpe to Better Hearts*, pp. 84-5.
[32] Hilda Johnstone (ed.), *Churchwardens' Presentments (Seventeenth Century) Part 1, Archdeaconry of Chichester*, Sussex Record Society, 49 (Lewes, 1948), p. 51.
[33] Jerome Neu, 'A Tear Is an Intellectual Thing' in *Representations*, 19 (1987), 35-61, p. 47; Alan Cruttenden, *Intonation*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1997), p. 174, crying, sobbing, laughing and giggling 'seem to be more or less universal' although custom in different cultures may decree that 'one or another of these affects is taboo or appropriate in certain circumstances.'

people learnt to control their bodily processes (including their issuance of base sounds), in order to conform to the changing socio-cultural world. Elias believed that these shifts were initially apparent in the upper echelons of society and percolated downwards during the early modern period.[34]

Snivelling, sniffing, coughing, belching, chewing, farting and other sounds of the respiratory and digestive tracts were not always welcome. Richard Weste counselled that although the retention of gas in the body is painful, its release should be undertaken quietly and secretly.[35] In formal situations, when rude sounds could not be completely stifled a person might have tried to hide them, or even to pretend they were issued by another person. John Baret included the verb 'tuske' in his dictionary of 1580, defining its meaning as to 'cunninglie cloke a fart with a cough.'[36]

Failure to repress or mask base bodily sounds could signal bad manners, especially at dinner. Francis Seager warned the diner to avoid 'smackynge thy lyppes, As comonly do hogges'.[37] Rhodes advised readers to 'suppe not lowde of thy Pottage, no tyme in all thy lyfe' and urged people to resist belching near someone's face, but rather to turn away and conceal it.[38] Weste advised that belching 'commendeth manners to be most foule and nothing worth' and that a sneezer should turn away from company, and resist the urge to sniff whilst talking to others; or run the risk of sounding like a 'brutish Storke' or an elephant.[39] When Erasmus Jones recommended appropriate dining behaviour he advised that 'Coughing, yawning, or sneezing over the Dishes, should be carefully avoided' but

---

[34] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process . The History of Manners*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford, 1978), esp. pp. 84-129.
[35] Richard Weste, *The Booke of Demeanor and the allowance and disallowance of certaine misdemeanors in companie* (1619), repr. in *The Babees Book*, p. 296.
[36] John Baret, *An Alvearie or Quadruple Dictionarie* (London, 1580), s.v. 'tuske'.
[37] F[rancis] S[eager], *The Schoole of Vertue and booke of good Nourture for chyldren and youth to learne theyr dutie by,* edn of 1557 repr. in *The Babees Book*, p. 344.
[38] Rhodes, *The Boke of Nurture*, in *The Babees Book*, pp. 76-7.
[39] Weste, *The Booke of Demeanor*, in *The Babees Book*, pp. 293-5.

complained that he had often seen people 'not altogether inaquainted with the Rules of good Manners, guilty of this Indecorum'. Jones also moaned that '[i]t is become allowable at all polite Tables, to wash one's Mouth, or gargle after Meals.'[40] Henry Misson, a Frenchman travelling in England in the seventeenth century observed that, with the exception of 'Persons of Quality, that have travell'd', those still following the 'old *English customs*' would belch freely at the table 'in all Companies'. Misson described such behaviour as a 'Whimsical thing', as in France 'Custom has ordain'd that Belching should be a Privilege reserv'd to Hogs'.[41]

These examples, particularly the comments of Jones and Misson suggest that Elias' interpretation is too linear. According to Jones, manners had slipped in the eighteenth century, and Misson's comments imply that table manners had a particularly national character. I will reconsider Elias' theory at the end of this chapter, after a consideration of the role of sounds in the presentation of the self in early modern England, with special reference to the sounds of laughter and crying.

Laughter and crying

As laughter and crying were the two most frequently mentioned sounds in contemporary didactic works, I will compare and contrast attitudes to these sounds in order to explore the use of nonverbal sounds in greater depth. Laughter was afforded special attention due to its association with cruelty and derogation, and appeals for restraint were common throughout the period. The appeal of early modern laughter as a topic of study has persisted. In his seminal article, published in 1977, Keith Thomas discussed 'The Place of Laughter in Tudor and Stuart

---

[40] Erasmus Jones, *The Man of Manners: Or, Plebian Polish'd. Being Plain and Familiar Rules for a Modest and Genteel Behaviour, on most of the ordinary Occasions of Life*, 3rd edn (London, 1737), pp. 7-9.

[41] Henri Misson, *Memoirs and Observations in his Travels over England with some Account of Scotland and Ireland* (orig. publ. 1698), trans. J. Ozell (London, 1719), pp. 316-17.

England', arguing that the study of laughter should concern the historian because it provides an insight into shifts in human sensibilities.[42] Yet, only a fraction of the attention paid to laughter concerns the sound of laughter, most works have focused on humour, jesting and ridicule, the activities which provoked laughter. Laughter and crying were both complex sounds. Laughing could be either a natural response to an amusing sight, thought or story, or a deliberate attempt to ridicule another. Crying was usually an involuntary reaction; it could indicate sympathy and compassion, sadness, depression, anguish, pain, fear, self-pity, grief, spirituality, and even joy. There was no single type or cause of laughter or crying, and these sounds could be expected or censured according to the social context.

When focusing on nonverbal communication, the epistemological problems identified in the introductory chapter are especially relevant. Although individuals perceive that a variety of meanings are conveyed by laughing or crying, these meanings are imprecise and can be difficult to describe.[43] The varieties of crying - lamenting, wailing, sobbing and weeping - have subtle differences, yet most authors usually write 'crying' or even 'tearful', thus eliminating all nuances of behaviour. 'Laughter' was also a blanket term which covered many types of sound - from guffawing to tittering. Whereas 'chuckling' described a person who was laughing 'vehemently' or 'convulsively', sniggering might have implied an intention to stifle laughter.[44] Boswell noted Dr. Johnson's advice about laughter; 'You ought no more to think it enough if you laugh than you think it enough if you speak. You may laugh in as many ways as you speak; and surely every way of

---

[42] Keith Thomas, 'The Place of Laughter in Tudor and Stuart England', *Times Literary Supplement*, 21 January 1977, 77-81.
[43] Mahadev L. Apte, *Humor and Laughter. An Anthropological Approach* (London, 1985), p. 250.
[44] Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1755), s.v. 'chuckle'; James Buchanan, *Linguae Britannicae Vera Pronunciatio: or, A New dictionary* (London, 1757), s.v. 'chuckle' - 'To break out into frequent fits of laughter.' Buchanan defined 'sniggering' as laughing 'as half afraid to be heard'; John Kersey, *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum: or, a general English Dictionary* (London, 1708) s.v. 'sniggering, to laugh in one's sleeve.'

speaking that is practised cannot be admired.'[45] Crying and laughing both present audible and visible evidence of feelings. Tears might also provide tangible evidence of both laughter and cries and these might issue silently or be accompanied by sounds.[46] Written representations can be vague and it is often difficult to determine whether the tearful were merely shedding tears, or making sounds as well. Likewise, a laugher might shake convulsively, or titter almost imperceptibly. The meaning of a sound depends on the manner in which it is issued and the context in which it is made or heard. Just as a deliberately dramatised cough carried a different meaning to a phthisical one; a sinister laugh reflected a different attitude to an embarrassed giggle; yet when transcribed these sounds might have been recorded as 'a cough' or 'a laugh'.

The description of a sound might be as illuminating about the person who recorded it as the person who issued it. A curmudgeonly old gentleman who objected to the giggling of young ladies might have described their sounds more critically than would a young lovesick fop. Interpretation of a sound depends on knowing whether it has been produced deliberately, yet most descriptions of crying in early modern diaries referred to the crying of others and it is not always possible to be sure what motivated these episodes. Speculation about the cause of the crying might be incorrect. In October 1667, unsure why his sister cried, Pepys guessed that it could have been induced by either 'her unwillingness for my going or any unkindness of my wife's or no, I know not'.[47]

Crying and laughing could be purely emotional responses to grief or pain, or to being amused by a thought or sight. Babies, unconditioned by cultural influences, cried for attention, food and warmth. Henry Cuffe, a sixteenth-century author and politician, reasoned that babies are born crying because they resent

---

[45] *Boswell's London Journal*, p. 288 (22 July 1763).
[46] Ramesey, *The Gentleman's Companion*, pp. 170-1.
[47] *Pepys*, VIII, pp. 474-5 (11 October 1667).

being taken from the warm womb through a narrow passage to the outside world where they find themselves cold and hungry.[48] Reasons for babies' cries were discussed in many contemporary works, ranging from the need for attention, being in pain, to a demand for food and warmth.[49] Locke categorised the cries of children as either 'stubborn and domineering' or 'querulous and whining.'[50] In the eighteenth century, physician William Cadogan presented his opinions about the proclivity of babies to cry, arguing that children of poor mothers cried because they are fed too much and are wrapped in too many clothes. At first the child cried because it is too warm, but the mother, believing it to be too cold adds even more clothing. Eventually the child is so weighed down that it is 'not able to cry any more, languishes and is quiet'. As proof of his theory Cadogan cited the fact that these children die. Cadogan opined that when a child cried the parents mistakenly believed that it wanted for food, but it really wanted attention, or some clothing removed and claimed that if the child 'be healthy and quite easy in its dress, it will hardly ever cry at all'.[51]

Adults were not expected to cry for food or warmth. Learning to quell such outbursts was central to maturation. That the young and the old were expected to behave differently was evident from the fact that some conduct books were directed at a juvenile audience. A proclivity to cry was symptomatic of immaturity and whereas babies were expected to cry, old men were expected to

---

[48] Henry Cuffe, *The Different Ages of a Man's Life*, 3rd edn (London, 1640), p. 197.
[49] *Low-Life; or one half of the world knows not how the Other Half Live ... in the Twenty-four Hours, between Saturday-Night and Monday-Morning. In a true Description of a Sunday, as it is usually spent within the Bills of Mortuality*, 3rd edn (London, 1764), pp. 17-18, 93; Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*, p. 35.
[50] John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), ed. John W. Yolton and Jean S. Yolton (Oxford, 1989), p. 171.
[51] William Cadogan, *An essay upon nursing and the management of children from their birth to three years of age* (first publ. 1748), 10th edn (London, 1772), pp. 8-9, 23. See also Bernardini Ramazzini, *De Morbis Artificum [Diseases of Workers]* (1713), trans Wilmer Cave Wright (Chicago, 1640), p. 201.

resist it; 'better children wepe than old men.'[52] Susceptibility to crying in adulthood could have implied weakness or emotional instability. Hobbes argued that those most likely to cry were those 'that rely principally on helps externall, such as are Women, and Children.'[53] The humiliation of being scolded made Anne Clifford, the daughter of the third Earl of Cumberland, cry in February 1616. References in Clifford's diaries to her own crying bouts are concentrated in the earlier years, when she was a woman in her early twenties, suggesting either that she cried less frequently when she was older or that she was less inclined to record her tears in her maturity.[54]

For adults, crying was a physical and emotional response to pain, grief and disappointment.[55] It is likely that the cries made by Pepys' servant while he beat her were induced by a combination of humiliation and pain, and Pepys only showed mercy when 'she cried extremely which made me vexed'.[56] Pain need not be physical to induce crying; Anne Clifford sobbed bitter tears in spiritual anguish when she felt unfit to receive communion.[57] Cries induced by depression and sadness feature several times in Pepys' diary, and in his autobiography Symon Patrick described the behaviour of a friend who was 'in so melancholy a manner that she could not speak but only weep'.[58] People were occasionally moved to tears through compassion, as an emotional reaction to a sad sight or story or alternatively by anger, fear or even joy.[59]

---

[52] John Heywood, *A Dialogue of Proverbs* (1546), ed. R.E. Habenicht (Berkeley, 1963), p. 123.
[53] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Tuck, p. 43.
[54] D.J.H. Clifford (ed.), *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford* (Stroud, 1992), p. 29 (16 February 1616); p. 32 (3 May 1616).
[55] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1621), pp. 211-13, 598-601.
[56] *Pepys*, I, p. 307 (1 December 1660).
[57] Clifford (ed.), *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford*, p. 70.
[58] *Pepys*, II, p. 64 (2 April 1661); p. 162 (26 August 1661); III, p. 274 (5 December 1662); Alexander Taylor (ed.), *The Works of Symon Patrick, sometime Bishop of Ely*, 9 vols (Oxford, 1858), IX, p. 459.
[59] Joanna Moody (ed.), *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady. The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599-1605*, p. 166 (3 October 1601); *Pepys*, IV, p. 117 (29 April 1663), p. 339 (19 October 1663); p. 31 (2 February 1663); Gottfried von Bülow (trans.), 'Journey through England and Scotland made by

Particular types of laughter were expected from children, but not from adults. Giggling and tittering were both considered to be foolish or childish forms of laughter.[60] Giggling was associated with girlishness, silliness, anxiety and embarrassment. In the mid-eighteenth century a group of young surgeons were described as 'pert, tittering, pragmatical half Gentlemen'.[61] While children had licence to giggle, they needed to exercise restraint at times and were reminded that in the schoolroom 'rude Brawling, Giggling and ... Loud Laughter' were distracting.[62]

Laughing together established and reinforced bonds between adults. Francis Hutcheson argued that laughter was heard most frequently amongst friends, who are commonly social equals, and could bolster mutual esteem. He observed that laughter could be infectious and so excused those who laughed without understanding the jest. When it enlivened conversation laughter would release tensions and remedy fretfulness.[63] Hutcheson was not the first to highlight the relaxing and edifying qualities of laughter. Robert Burton had reckoned that the right sort of mirth could remedy melancholia and Thomas Fuller described 'Harmlesse mirth' as 'the best cordiall against the consumption of the spirits'.[64] In 1756 the philanthropist Jonas Hanway considered the best course of action when conversing with a friend who was upset, advising that they should be laughed into a 'good-humor'.[65] Seventeenth-century preacher Isaac Barrow categorised as good

---

Lupold von Wedel in the Years 1584-1585', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, new ser., 9 (1895), 223-70, p. 266; Charles Jackson (ed.), *The Diary of Abraham de la Pryme, the Yorkshire Antiquary*, The Surtees Society, 54 (Durham, 1870), p. 7; *Pepys*, I, p. 291 (12 November 1660); IX, p. 522 (16 April 1669).

[60] Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum* s.v. 'giggle', 'giggling'.

[61] *The Country Spy; Or a Ramble thro' London* (London, c.1750), p. 22.

[62] *Good manners for schools or a paraphrase upon qui mihi etc.* [Broadsheet], trans. Oswald Dykes (London, 1700).

[63] Hutcheson, *Reflections upon Laughter,* pp. 14, 26-7, 32.

[64] Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 375; Fuller, *The Holy State and the Profane State*, ed. Graff Walten, II, p. 155.

[65] Jonas Hanway, *A Journal of Eight Days' Journey from Portsmouth to Kingston upon Thames* (London, 1756), p. 66.

any laughter which rendered 'conversation pleasant and sprightly, for mutual satisfaction and comfort' and laughter which raised spirits or relaxed people.[66] The positive benefits of laughter were considered in the poem entitled *Laugh & Lye Down; Or, A pleasant, but sure Remedy for the Gout, Without Expence or Danger* (1739), whose author declared that laughing together strengthened the ties of friendship.[67]

There was a gender dimension to the freedom to laugh, and women were the special focus of much advice. Some conduct books were targeted solely at women, or for husbands and fathers to use to instruct their wives and daughters. There was also a clear class dimension to such advice. The refined lady learnt that a women who believed she 'must always be in a laugh' was ridiculous and that to a man the 'Chattering of Monkeys' was preferable to 'such a Concert of senseless Merriment'.[68] In the inaugural issue of *The Tatler*, Richard Steele warned that 'if a fine lady thinks fit to giggle at Church' she will be exposed in the journal.[69] George Savile, the Marquis of Halifax, remarked with distaste that some women would seek attention by laughing loudly, which looked 'as if they beat their Drums for Voluntiers' and complained that ladies were encouraged to engage in such behaviour by the applause of others. Halifax warned that a lady should not forswear laughter altogether, but should be moderate and never laugh loudly, 'which is an unnatural Sound'.[70] At the end of the seventeenth century one

---

[66] Isaac Barrow, *Against Foolish Talking and Jesting* (posth. 1678), in J. Brogden (ed.), *Illustrations of the Liturgy and Ritual of the United Church of England and Ireland. Being sermons and discourses selected from the works of Eminent Divines who lived during the seventeenth century*, 3 vols (London, 1842), II, p. 389-90.
[67] *Laugh and Lye Down; Or, A pleasant, but sure Remedy for the Gout, Without Expence or Danger* (London, 1739), p. 7.
[68] George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, *The Lady's New-years Gift: or, Advice to a Daughter, Under these following Heads: Viz. Religion, Husband, House and Family, Servants, Behaviour and Conversation, Friendship, Censure, Vanity and Affection, Pride, Diversions, Dancing* (London, 1688), p. 106.
[69] *The Tatler*, no.1 [Steele] April 1709.
[70] Halifax, *The Lady's New-years Gift*, pp. 108, 159.

conduct book writer aimed advice at the servant maid, remarking that in order to find a sober and honest husband she must be 'loving and courteous to your fellow Servants, not gigling or idling out your time, or wantoning in the society of men'.[71] Proverbial wisdom held that 'a maid, that laughs, is half taken.'[72]

Not all early-modern men disapproved of the laughter of women and if proverbial wisdom can be believed some positively enjoyed it - 'Gaming, Women, and Wine, while they laugh they make men pine.'[73] In their diaries Samuel Pepys and Dudley Ryder presented less restrictive views about female laughter than were apparent in the normative conducts works, although both men, it must be noted, were relatively young and lusty when they recorded their sentiments and were perhaps more liberal than some of their contemporaries.[74] Pepys recalled the pleasure he gained by listening to 'a mighty pretty lady' seated to his rear at the theatre, who 'did laugh so heartily and constantly that it did me good to hear her.'[75] Unlike Pepys, Ryder felt uncomfortable in the company of women, and noted enviously the reception given to his friend Mr Powell, whose conversation 'consists very much in joining together the most odd contradictory ideas in order to create a laugh.' Mrs Marshall, a lady who had attracted Ryder's attention, 'loves nothing better than to laugh and be merry' and complaining that Ryder was dull, desired Mr Powell to raise laughter. This rendered Ryder mute through awkwardness and inhibition.[76]

---

[71] *The Complete Servant-Maid; or, the Young Maidens Tutor* (London, 1677), p. 62; see also Jones, *The Man of Manners*, p. 38; Thomas Overbury, *Characters* (1614), repr. ed. by W.J. Paylor, *The Overburian Characters. To which is added A Wife*, Percy Reprints, 13 (Oxford, 1936), p. 44 - 'A Chamber-Mayde'.
[72] Robert Codrington, *A Collection of Many select and excellent Proverbs out of several Languages* (London, 1672), no. 23; Fuller, *Gnomologia*, p. 10, no. 269.
[73] George Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum - Or Outlandish proverbs, sentences, &c* (London, 1651), p. 37.
[74] *Pepys*, IV, p. 230 (13 July 1663); VI, p. 323 (8 December 1665).
[75] *Pepys*, VIII, p. 440 (16 September 1667).
[76] *Dudley Ryder*, pp. 241-50 (24 May 1716).

Whereas women were the focus of much concern about laughter, men bore the brunt of advice about crying. The belief that men should try to resist the urge to cry was a common theme throughout the early modern period. In comparing the diaries written by women with those written by men it becomes apparent that references to the diarist's own crying are much more evident in those written by women. A third of all references to nonverbal sounds contained in Anne Clifford's diaries referred to her own bouts of tearfulness.[77] When descriptions of 'sobbing' and 'blubbering' feature in diary entries they usually refer to the cries of women, and were recorded as such by men.[78] On the strength of their diary entries, Dudley Ryder and Samuel Pepys both believed that men should resist the urge to cry, and when either man admitted to bouts of crying their narrative was usually coloured with guilt. More frequently they recorded their efforts to stifle tears. When a servant left his employ, Pepys 'went away' because he 'could hardly forbear weeping' and when his brother was ill and talking gibberish in March 1664 Pepys wrote 'I *confess* it made me weep'.[79]

When male diarists did make reference to their own crying it was normally when induced by the grief of bereavement. Ralph Thoresby spent a tearful week in November 1678 following the death of his father.[80] On reading about the regicide of Charles I in 1649, Ralph Josselin admitted that his 'tears were not restrained at the passages about his death', adding that his crying was induced by 'sin of the kingdom'.[81] The tenor of advice to men concerning appropriate *public* behaviour

---

[77] Clifford (ed.), *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford*, p. 29 (16 February 1616); p. 32 (3 May 1616); p. 70 (26 March 1619).
[78] Sorlien (ed.), *The Diary of John Manningham*, p. 52 (19 February 1602); *Pepys*, V, p. 176 (12 June 1664)
[79] *Pepys*, II, p. 162 (26 August 1661); III, p. 274 (5 December 1662); IV, pp. 31-2 (2 February 1663); IV, p. 117 (29 April 1663); IV, p. 393 (22 November 1663); V, p. 84 (14 March 1664) - my emphasis; *Dudley Ryder*, p. 282 (23 July 1726).
[80] Joseph Hunter (ed.), *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby FRS, Author of the Topography of Leeds (1677-1724)* 2 vols (London, 1830), I, p. 32 (6 November 1678).
[81] *Ralph Josselin*, p. 115 (4 February 1649).

when in distress suggested a need for moderation, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

As he noted the mood in the aftermath of Queen Elizabeth's death in 1603, Thomas Dekker remarked 'men knew not how to weepe, because they had never bin taught to shed tears of that making.'[82] Just over a decade earlier George Puttenham had opined that;

> generally to weepe for any sorrow (as one may doe for pitie) is not so decent in a man: and therefore all high minded persons, when they cannot chuse but shed tears, wil turne away their faces as a countenance *undecent* for a man to shew ... But for Ladies and women to weepe and shed teares at every little greefe, it is *nothing uncomely*, but rather a signe of much good nature & meeknes of minde, a most decent propertie for that sexe ... for by the common proverbe, a woman will weepe for pitie to see a gosling goe barefoote.[83]

This masculine restraint is also evident in illustrations of public grief in the seventeenth century. When Pepys described a melancholy church service in the aftermath of the Fire of London, at which the congregation cried, he added 'especially the women.'[84] The sons and daughters of the Catholic Sir Thomas Hawkins are depicted on his tomb, sculpted in 1618. Whereas the daughters are twisted with grief, sobbing into their hands, the sons are still and calm.[85] (See fig. 4) In the same year Richard Brathwait reasoned that as death is not a sad event, because the dead proceeded to their next life, 'Moderate weeping is most highly commended, for it expresseth a natural affection we had to the departed, with a

---

[82] Thomas Dekker, *The Wonderfull Yeare* (1603), in Frank Percy Wilson (ed.), *The Plague Pamphlets of Thomas Dekker* (Oxford, 1925), p. 13.
[83] George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London, 1589), sig. Ii 4, my emphasis. This is a curious twisting of the saying which appeared in William Baldwin's *Beware the Cat* during the prev ious decade, and there reads 'It is as much pity to see a woman weep as to see a goose go barefoot.', William Baldwin, *Beware the Cat* (1570), ed. William A. Ringler, Jnr and Michael Flachmann (San Marino, 1988), p. 43.
[84] *Pepys*, VII, p. 283 (9 September 1666); *Evelyn*, III, pp. 452-5 (3 September 1666).
[85] Margaret Whinney, *Sculpture in Britain, 1530-1830* (Harmondsworth, 1964), pp. 18-19.

fig. 4, The tomb of Sir Thomas Hawkins, by Epiphanius Evesham (1618)

Christian-like moderation of our griefe'.[86] Moderation was ideal, yet some commentators suggested that temporary lapses in moderation were excusable. Robert Burton described the melancholia induced by the death of loved ones, which at one extreme could be 'so grevious' that 'it takes away all appetite, desire of life, and extinguisheth all delights, it causeth deep sighes and groanes, tears, exclamations, howling, roaring'. Some 'brave discreet men' are so grief stricken that they 'forget them selves, and weep like children many moneths together'. Even a 'grave staid wise man' might, at the death of a friend, 'cry out, houle and roare, and tear their haire, lamenting many months after' and howl like an Irish woman. Burton suggested that crying in this manner would be acceptable for one or two days, but any longer would be immoderate.[87]

A divergence of opinions is apparent in commentary about male grief during the early-eighteenth century. Some writers still advised moderation in all forms of crying. Jonas Hanway argued that crying should be in proportion to suffering, noting that;

> A wise man may shed tears IN MEASURE, for the death of his son. And a young lady we see WILL weep for the elopement of her monkey. We may sympathize with the ONE, because he acts according to nature; and be sorry for the OTHER, because she forsakes her reason.[88]

Mirroring the views expressed in the previous centuries, Richard Steele remarked that 'It is as mean to be over-joy'd upon Occasions of good fortune, as to be dejected in circumstances of Distress, Laughter in one condition, is as *unmanly* as Weeping in the other.'[89] Yet, a letter which appeared in the same journal in the same year complained that the proscriptive etiquette surrounding grief stifled

---

[86] Richard Brathwait, *The Description of a Good Wife; or, a Rare one amongst Women* (London, 1618), sigs K2-K8v.
[87] Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, pp. 211-2, 412, 415.
[88] Hanway, *A Journal of Eight Days' Journey*, p. 72. Burton made a similar announcement about the appropriate cause for tears, in *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 418.
[89] *The Spectator*, no. 143 [Steele] 14 August 1711.

genuine emotion. The correspondent, 'B.D.', wondered what 'The Spectator' thought of the 'common Sense the ordinary people have of the Demonstrations of Grief, who prescribe Rules and Fashions to the most solemn Affliction; such as the Loss of the nearest Relations and dearest Friends'. Remarking with distaste that a griever must pay close attention to the muscles in his face, this author noted that nothing was more favourable in such circumstances as 'immoderate' weeping, and greivers were judged 'by the quantity of tears that you pour out for the Dead ... But experience has told us nothing is so fallacious as this outward sign of sorrow'.[90] This letter is significant in that it reveals that there might be a class dimension to funeral behaviour by the eighteenth century, with 'ordinary people' thought to follow a fashion for immoderation in funeral weeping.

If men and women, and young and old, laughed and cried differently, then such sounds could not have been universal, reflex reactions, but must have been tempered by cultural influences. Written and unwritten rules determined not only who could laugh and cry, but also how, where, with whom, or at whom. To laugh overtly would have frequently been undiplomatic because it would have inflamed a tense situation or created a bad impression. In 1562 Venetian merchant Alessandro Magno noted in his travel diary that when his friend became stuck in mud he 'could only just prevent [himself] from laughing, which would have made him angrier.'[91] Uffenbach also found himself needing to stifle laughter on various occasions whilst in London in 1710. Perhaps by misinterpreting subtleties of the language, he mistakenly considered that a man who showed him a shell collection was being boastful, noting that 'we [he and his companion] could scarce restrain our laughter', but was relieved to have held back when he realised that he had judged the collector hastily. Dr Woodward, with whom Uffenbach became

---

[90] *The Spectator*, no. 95 [Steele] 19 June 1711.
[91] Barron et al (eds), 'The London journal of Alessandro Magno 1562', p. 149.

acquainted during his stay in London, received similar attention from the German visitor. Uffenbach described his strange and pompous manner; he had 'such ridiculous airs and graces than one can scarce prevent oneself from laughing.' Later, the Doctor's 'affected gestures' and rolling eyes caused Uffenbach and his companion to lose control of their restraint and they succumbed to laughter.[92]

Pepys recorded his own bouts of uncontrollable laughter at comedies and farces, noting once that he laughed so much that his head ached.[93] In May 1669 Pepys and others laughed at a mock sermon 'till it made us all burst'.[94] Others mentioned being 'almost strangled with laughing' and 'nearly [dying] of laughing'.[95] Thomas Nashe warned that such extreme laughter could be perilous and a proverb exclaimed that 'He laughs ill that laughs himself to death.'[96] In 1748 a warning against tickling appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in an account of the effects of tickling on a child who laughed until he 'grew black in the face' and became 'short-breathed' and convulsive; 'it was remarkable, that after a little time, when he grew tired with laughing in earnest, he still continued a noise like laughing'.[97]

When individuals failed to behave according to the written or unwritten rules of conduct their behaviour might have indicated a disregard for others, or a cultural distance.[98] John Evelyn applauded the behaviour of the Moroccan Ambassador who occasionally attended the theatre whilst in London, 'where when

---

[92] Quarrell and Mare (eds), *London in 1710*, pp. 172-3 (30 October 1710), pp. 177-8 (31 October 1710).
[93] *Pepys*, VIII, p. 387 (16 August 1667).
[94] *Pepys*, IX, p. 554 (14 May 1669); see also VI, p. 248 (1 October 1665).
[95] Charlotte Charke, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs Charlotte Charke, youngest daughter of Colley Cibber ... written by Herself* (London, 1755), p. 73; Norman Marlow (trans.), *The Diary of Thomas Isham of Lamport (1658-81) - 1671-3* (Farnborough, 1971), p. 159 (2 October 1672).
[96] Thomas Nashe, *The Terrors of the Night or a discourse of Apparitions* (1594) in Nashe, *Works*, I, p. 377.
[97] *The Gentleman's Magazine*, no. 18 (December 1748), p. 554.
[98] Erving Goffman, *Behavior in Public Places. Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings* (New York, 1963), p. 26.

upon any foolish or fantastical action he could not forbeare laughing, he endeavoured to hide it with extraordinary modesty and gravity.' In contrast, he condemned the behaviour of the Russian Ambassador, who 'behaved himself like a Clowne.'[99] George Puttenham found the behaviour of foreign ambassadors who laughed 'so dissolutely' in the Queen's presence 'very unbecoming'.[100]

Like immoderate criers, immoderate laughers were also berated in sermons and conduct works.[101] In the mid-seventeenth century, preacher Isaac Barrow asserted that a 'man of ripe age and sound judgement' might occasionally engage in mirth, but should not grow fond of it, or 'doat and dwell upon it' as such behaviour would be 'extremely childish or brutish, and far below a man.'[102] *Mirth in Ridicule*, an anonymous satire, described immoderate laughing as foolish, unkind and 'a heinous Vice'.[103]

A time to weep and a time to laugh - the spiritual aspect of crying and laughter

John Bunyan's *A Few Sighs from Hell* (1658) is a verse by verse exposition of Luke 19:19-31.[104] Striving to convert readers, or listeners, through the parable of the rich man who descends to hell and the leper who rises to heaven, Bunyan constructs various contrasts which highlight the suffering of the damned, whose bitter cries are heard in hell. The peace experienced by the leper in heaven is contrasted with the 'mournfull groans', the 'roaring' and 'the lamentable condition of the damned and their lamentable howling and crying out under the anguish of

---

[99] *Evelyn*, IV, p. 269 (24 January 1682).
[100] Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, sig. Ii4v.
[101] Rhodes, *The Boke of Nurture*, in *The Babees Book*, p, 97; Weste, *The Booke of Demeanor*, in *The Babees Book*, p. 294; Barrow, *Against Foolish Talking and Jesting*.
[102] Barrow, *Against Foolish Talking and Jesting*, II, p. 397.
[103] *Mirth in Ridicule, or a Satyr against Immoderate Laughing* (London, 1708), p. 6.
[104] John Bunyan, *A Few Sighs from Hell* (1658), in T.L. Underwood and Roger Sharrock (eds), *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan*, 13 vols (Oxford, 1980) I, 231-382; especially pp. 245-6, 278. Unless footnoted otherwise, extracts are from these three pages.

spirit'.[105] Bunyan contrasts the laughter of the ungodly on earth, with the godly laughing in heaven, and devotes much time to comparing the cries of sinners in hell with the anguish of the godly on earth. In verse 24 the rich man is crying. Seeing the leper Lazarus in heaven he begs Abraham to send him down with a drop of water; 'And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.' There is irony here as Lazarus had begged at the rich man's door when he was alive, but was turned away. Bunyan selects the words *'and he cried'* from the biblical passage, and devotes much space to them.

> From these words, *and he cried*, we may observe, first, what a change the ungodly will have, when they come into hell. Where he saith, he cried; it is like he was laughing, jesting, jearing, drinking, mocking, swearing, cursing, prating, persecuting of the godly in his prosperity, among his filthy companions; but now the case is otherwise; now he is in another frame; now his proud, stout, currish carriage is come down, as is clearly signified by those words, *And he cried.* Therefore by these words you may secondly observe, that the laughter of the ungodly will not last alwayes, but will be sure to end in a cry, *The tryumphing of the wicked is short,* Job 20.5. O no my friends, consider, you must have a change, either here or in hell. If you be not new creatures, regenerate persons, new born babes in this world before you go hence, your note will be changed, your conditions will be changed: for as you come into hell, you must cry, O did but the singing drunkards, when they are making merry on the Alebench think on this, that if they drop into hell they must cry, it would make them change their note, and cry, What shall I do, wither shall I go when I die? ... for if when they depart, they drop down into eternal destruction, they shall have such a sense of their sins, and the punishment due to the same, that it shall make them cry.

The word, 'cry' is the unmistakable focus of this exposition, and it gathers significance through rhythmic intonation. In this section it especially denotes anguish, self-pity, desperation, hopelessness and misery. The damned, we learn, cry for many reasons, but chiefly because they realise they are in hell and can

---

[105] *ibid.*, p. 281.

never escape. They even cry '[t]o think, that their crying will do them no good.' Bunyan stresses the word 'cry' by placing it alone and juxtaposing it with the lists of sins which provoke it. By referring to crying eight times in this passage, and twenty-five times in the whole discussion of the verse, and by punctuating sentences and paragraphs with the word 'cry', Bunyan ensures that the reader cannot mistake its centrality.

To denote the various tortured states of mind experienced by the damned, Bunyan does not describe actual sounds but metaphorical ones. These are the cries of the soul. Everybody hears the sighs and cries of hell occasionally, but the ungodly 'stop their ears' and ignore sermons.[106] Like flies, they are too busy making noise to be quiet and listen, and are only silent when caught in the web (of hell), and beyond salvation. They sleep through the noise, like the smith's dog who lies at the foot of the anvil, not waking until they are burned by the sparks from the fire.[107] Instead of being doomed to cry eternally in hell, Bunyan hopes people will cry on earth, cry for the anguish of Christ's suffering, and for their own past sins. In contrast, the ungodly laugh.

The polarities of *types* of laughter and crying are expressed in the charged word 'change'. They will 'change their note'. The ungodly, while on earth, *chose* to laugh at people, even the godly. In hell, they *must* cry; there is no alternative. The crying is contrasted with a facile laughter on earth; 'endless misery for a moments mirth'.[108] Conversely, the godly, who have learnt from hearing the cries of the damned, are filled with anguish while on earth, and the Lord keeps a tally of their sighs. Bunyan rounds off the juxtaposition neatly, by stating that the godly,

---

[106] *ibid.*, p. 279.
[107] *ibid.*, p. 344. The blacksmith's dog, when asked why he slept whilst his master hammered, replied 'There's a time to sleep And a time to wake', and that the silence which followed the hammering indicated the time to eat, thus reflecting the imagery of timeliness in Luke 19. *Aesop's fables. A selection following the translation of Sir Roger L'Estrange, Kt 1616-1704* (London, 1949), p. 56.
[108] Bunyan, *A Few Sighs from Hell*, p. 231.

who cry out 'in good earnest' while on earth, will laugh in heaven.[109] The key here is timing; delayed gratification versus instant gratification. The godly cry while on earth and laugh in heaven, while the ungodly laugh on earth and cry (to no avail) in hell. Bunyan is not suggesting that the laughter of the ungodly causes them to be eternally damned, nor that the sighs of the godly lead them to heaven. The sounds are indicative, they are manifestations of personality, whether vice-ridden or virtuous. So it is not the laughter which is ungodly, but the laugher. Bunyan's metaphoric use of crying and laughing would carry no symbolic weight unless the readers shared some understanding of what it meant to cry in anguish, or to laugh hedonistically.

This polarity of laughing and crying was a common theme in sermons.[110] Edward Grove taught that 'it is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to go to the House of Feasting' as 'Sorrow is better than Laughter', adding 'the Heart of fools is in the House of Mirth', whereas the heart of the wise man is in the house of mourning. To Grove laughter was senseless levity akin to 'conversing like Apes' and involved ridiculing others.[111] A proverb warned that 'Some laugh amornings who ere night shed teares' and, like Bunyan, some believed that those who laughed at religion would have their ears filled with howling and wailing in hell.[112] Richard Baxter argued that preachers who were laughed at on earth would be 'rewarded' by God, who in his wisdom would 'mock' those who teased them by making them 'lie roaring perpetually in the flames of hell, and the God of mercy

---

[109] *ibid.* p. 234.
[110] Edward Grove, *Mirth's Madness, or the Vanity of Mens Laughter, and of their Merry Amusements in their Idle Hours. Considered in a Sermon Upon Ecclesiastes II.1,2* (Norwich, 1702); *Evelyn*, VI, p. 494 (22 March 1702); R. Parker Sorlien (ed.), *The Diary of John Manningham of the Middle Temple, 1602-3* (Hanover, New Hampshire, 1976), pp. 132-6 (13 February 1603); see also Hanway, *A Journal of Eight Days' Journey*, p. 165.
[111] Grove, *Mirth's Madness*, pp. 12-13.
[112] Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionary of the French and English tongues* (London, 1611), s.v. 'soir'.

himself shall laugh at them'.[113] It seemed that the key to moral laughing and crying was timing.

In early modern England piety could be expressed through tears. Bradford Puritan Joseph Lister recorded prayer meetings he attended during the Rebellion in Ireland in 1641 when many Protestants were killed. He described the time as 'those weeping, praying and wrestling seasons' and exclaimed 'what tears and groans were to be seen and heard in that chapel! I am sure it was a place of weepers.'[114] The tears were induced by insecurity and pity and their collective nature makes these bouts of weeping significant.

Sincerity and the manipulation of sounds

The assessment of the sincerity of pious crying depended on the religious persuasion of the commentator.[115] Preachers were often characterised as weeping their words out. The character of a 'yong raw Preacher' was sketched by Earle in the 1620s. His 'action is all passion, and his speech Interjections; he has an excellent facultie in crying Ah, and Spitts w[i]th a veri good grace. He will not draw his handkercher out of his due place, nor blow his nose w[i]thout discretion.'[116] The eighteenth-century Anglo-American evangelist George Whitefield would often weep during his sermons. Whitefield found that public crying was a powerful oratorical device, inspiring devotion in his listeners, but when he cried in private his tutors regarded him as pathetic, weak and effeminate. His friend, Cornelius Winter, reflecting on Whitefield's preaching, remarked;

---

[113] Richard Baxter, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* (1846) cited in Philip C. Almond, *Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 83.
[114] Thomas Wright (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Lister of Bradford* (London, 1842), pp. 6-7.
[115] See, for example, Rev Robert Kirk, 'Sermons, conferences, men's opinions of the late Transactions with a description of London' (1689), transcribed by Donald Maclean as 'London in 1689-90 by the Rev. R. Kirk. Part IV', *London and Middlesex Archaeological Society Transactions*, new ser., 7 (London, 1933), 133-49, p. 146; Misson, *Memoirs*, trans. Ozell, pp. 228-9.
[116] John Earle, *The Autograph Manuscript of Microcosmographie* (c.1627) facs. edn (Leeds, 1966), p. 6; see also p. 9 'A grave Divine'.

> I hardly ever knew him to go thro' a sermon without weeping, more or less, and I truly believe his were the tears of sincerity ... I could hardly bear such unreserved use of tears, and the scope he gave to his feelings, for sometimes he exceedingly wept, stamped loudly and passionately, and was frequently so overcome, that, for a few seconds, you would suspect he never could recover ...

These public outbursts were captivating because they made manifest Whitefield's religious fervour. He was regarded by some as a vehicle for Christ's tears, with his behaviour evidence of God moving through him.[117]

We will never know whether or not such displays of piety were genuine expressions of emotion or cynical means of manipulation. In his *Arte of Rhetoric* (1560), Thomas Wilson emphasised the emotive aspect of tears, noting that 'a weeping eye causeth much moisture, and provoketh teares'.[118] Those wallowing in self-pity or whose spoilt nature led them to seek attention might have cried for effect and some diarists referred to instances when they believed that others had indulged in such behaviour. To Richard Brathwait the '*Crocodyles* teares are not by halfe so mortally dangerous' as the weeping of a shrewish woman, whose 'hatefull teares' were affected in order to get her own way with 'serpentine subtiltie.'[119]

Some might have employed their nonverbal abilities more artfully than others. Just as linguistic ability varied, some people would have been more adept in their use of sound than others. It was frequently noted during the early modern period that people could improve their use of sounds for cynical or manipulative ends, and a proverb advised; 'Learn weeping, and thou shalt gain laughing.'[120] A letter in *The Spectator* described teaching the art of polite affectation to a friend

---

[117] Henry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist; George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1991), pp. 41-2.
[118] Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetoric* (1560), ed. G.H. Mair (Oxford, 1909), p. 134.
[119] Richard Brathwayt, *Essaies upon the Five Senses, with a pithie one upon detraction* (London, 1620), pp. 140-1.
[120] Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum*, p. 8.

> I hardly ever knew him to go thro' a sermon without weeping, more or less, and I truly believe his were the tears of sincerity ... I could hardly bear such unreserved use of tears, and the scope he gave to his feelings, for sometimes he exceedingly wept, stamped loudly and passionately, and was frequently so overcome, that, for a few seconds, you would suspect he never could recover ...

These public outbursts were captivating because they made manifest Whitefield's religious fervour. He was regarded by some as a vehicle for Christ's tears, with his behaviour evidence of God moving through him.[117]

We will never know whether or not such displays of piety were genuine expressions of emotion or cynical means of manipulation. In his *Arte of Rhetoric* (1560), Thomas Wilson emphasised the emotive aspect of tears, noting that 'a weeping eye causeth much moisture, and provoketh teares'.[118] Those wallowing in self-pity or whose spoilt nature led them to seek attention might have cried for effect and some diarists referred to instances when they believed that others had indulged in such behaviour. To Richard Brathwait the '*Crocodyles* teares are not by halfe so mortally dangerous' as the weeping of a shrewish woman, whose 'hatefull teares' were affected in order to get her own way with 'serpentine subtiltie.'[119]

Some might have employed their nonverbal abilities more artfully than others. Just as linguistic ability varied, some people would have been more adept in their use of sound than others. It was frequently noted during the early modern period that people could improve their use of sounds for cynical or manipulative ends, and a proverb advised; 'Learn weeping, and thou shalt gain laughing.'[120] A letter in *The Spectator* described teaching the art of polite affectation to a friend

---

[117] Henry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist; George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1991), pp. 41-2.
[118] Thomas Wilson, *Arte of Rhetoric* (1560), ed. G.H. Mair (Oxford, 1909), p. 134.
[119] Richard Brathwayt, *Essaies upon the Five Senses, with a pithie one upon detraction* (London, 1620), pp. 140-1.
[120] Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum*, p. 8.

who is 'utterly a foreigner to the language of looks and glances ... I have bestowed two months in teaching her to sigh when she is not concerned, and to smile when she is not pleased.'[121]

One proverb warned that 'Women laugh when they can, and weep when they will' and women were supposed by several male diarists to be especially inclined to manipulative weeping and were suspected of crying for attention.[122] According to *The Spectator*, the 'Coquet' used sounds manipulatively; she 'Sighs when she is not Sad, and Laughs when she is not Merry.'[123] Pepys described how his wife cried cunningly when they were in company in order to win an argument, knowing and that it would seem as though he was bullying her and so forcing him to capitulate.[124] Pepys did not believe that his wife was uncommonly insincere - when describing the behaviour of a recently widowed woman he noted 'I find she can, as all other women, cry and yet talk of other things all in a breath.'[125] Thomas Overbury characterised the widow's tears thus; 'The end of her husband begins in teares; and the end of her teares begins in a husband.'[126]

An awareness of the power of sounds would enable one either to perpetrate or detect duplicity. Such skills might have also developed with maturity. Elizabeth Delaval reproached herself for being fooled by the sighs of a former admirer who she discovered had married another, and vowed never again to trust such transient exclamations of love.[127] Some tried to use sounds to conceal other

---

[121] *The Spectator*, no. 66 [Steele] 16 May 1711; 'Simon Wagstaff' [Jonathan Swift] *A Complete Collection of Genteel and Ingenious Conversation According to the most Polite Mode and Method now used at Court, and in the Best Companies of England*, repr. of 1755 edn (Bristol, 1995), p. 108.
[122] Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum*, p. 49. Part of this proverb appeared in Baldwin's *Beware the Cat* (1570), ed. Ringler and Flachmann, p. 53 - 'Women can weep when they wil'. See, for example, *Dudley Ryder*, p. 53 (14 July 1715).
[123] *The Spectator*, no. 247 [Addison] 13 December 1711.
[124] *Pepys*, V, p. 176 (12 June 1664).
[125] *Pepys*, IX, p. 34 (22 January 1668); Fuller, *Gnomologia*, p. 176, no. 4120 -'She can laugh and cry, both in a wind.'
[126] Overbury, *Characters*, p. 71 'An Ordinarie Widdow'. See also Fuller, *Gnomologia*, p. 201, no. 4737 - 'The rich Widow cries with one Eye, and laughs with the other.'
[127] Elizabeth Delaval declared that she would take care to be less emotional and stop mourning for

sounds, or to shift emphasis. In a similar fashion to obscuring a fart with a cough, an embarrassed giggle might have been issued to try to deflect attention from a gauche comment. When Pepys' Uncle Wight implied to Elizabeth that he should father her child, Pepys noted that 'It seemed he did say all this in a kind of counterfeit laugh; but by all words that passed, which I cannot now so well set down, it is plain to me that he was in good earnest, and I fear all his kindness is but only his lust to her.'[128] Uncle Wight presumably intended that his laugh would lighten the situation, or suggest ambiguity. The ability to detect deceptive uses of sounds would have conferred a social advantage. Such deceit was frequently obvious. According to Ramesey indignant laughter sounded artificial and was usually feigned.[129] When Ryder detected a deceitful use of sighing and crying by an aunt who sought sympathy for what he supposed to be an imaginary illness, he recorded that he 'had not the least sentiments of pity' and noted that his aunt gradually forgot she was supposed to be ill and 'talked as well and brisk as if not at all out of order.'[130] When his grandmother died in September 1716 Ryder remarked cynically about his mother's insincerity:

> Indeed she seemed all the afternoon to put on a sighing, sobbing air, as a thing becoming and proper, much as I guess in the same manner as when she groans and looks dismal at the reading a good book or hearing an affectionate prayer.[131]

Attempts to use sounds for cynical ends were not always successful, but those who skilfully employed sounds might have enjoyed an enhanced personal popularity. Those providing advice to jest-tellers often reminded their readers that

---

trifles, 'Most of those things that I have hetherto shed tear's for, I must now (with sorrow own) deserved not a sigh'. D. G. Greene (ed.), *The Meditations of Lady Elizabeth Delaval 1662-1671*, The Surtees Society, 190 (Durham, 1978), p. 171 (3 December 1669).

[128] *Pepys*, V, pp. 145-6 (11 May 1664).

[129] Ramesey, *The Gentleman's Companion*, p. 174.

[130] *Dudley Ryder*, p. 213 (3 April 1716).

[131] *Dudley Ryder*, p. 339 (30 September 1716).

laughing at one's own joke was counter-productive.[132] Addison wrote that the truly humorous do not laugh at their own jokes and those displaying poor wit could be detected easily for they laughed wildly while their audience remained silent; 'For as TRUE HUMOUR generally looks serious, while every body laughs about him; FALSE HUMOUR is always laughing, whilst every body about him looks serious'.[133] Dudley Ryder bemoaned the popularity of some of his male friends who achieved an allure by eschewing the required norms of politeness in social occasions, for example, by laughing at and with young ladies. Ryder's response was both condemnatory and envious.[134] Ryder himself admitted to, or rather boasted of, an attempt to deceive others about his personality through sounds. In bed with his Cousin Joseph in 1716 he was pleased that 'we laughed so loud as to make the ladies in bed hear us and Mrs Marshall might think me more merry than when I am in her company.'[135]

A study of a year in the relationship of Mr and Mrs Pepys, followed by a close study of one of Thomas Dekker's plague vignettes is a useful way to explore the issues of manipulation, insincerity and skilful use of sounds, and these follow. Emotions ran high in the Pepys household in 1668, following Elizabeth's discovery of an affair between Pepys and her own companion Deb Willet. In March, Pepys made his first physical advances to Deb whilst she was sobbing after being chided by Elizabeth. Seven months of flirtation followed, during which time Elizabeth's suspicions were raised. Pepys became aware of simmering tensions in June when he detected that Elizabeth was in a 'melancholy fusty humour, and crying'. Elizabeth left the marital bed early that morning and climbed into her maid's bed

---

[132] Ramesey, *The Gentleman's Companion*, p. 172; Abel Boyer, *The Wise and Ingeneous Companion* (1741), cited in Mary Abbott, *Life Cycles in England, 1560-1720. Cradle to Grave* (London, 1996), p. 214.
[133] *The Spectator*, no. 35 [Addison] 10 April 1711.
[134] *Dudley Ryder*, p. 92 (7 September 1715); p. 164 (7 January 1716).
[135] *ibid*, p. 307 (19 September 1716).

'crying and sobbing', and when she later returned to Pepys she was still crying. The following morning Elizabeth again became tearful, and this time Pepys appears to have been losing his patience for her, dismissively writing that she 'fell into her blubbering again.' Pepys sensed that a 'storm will break out, I know, in a little time.'[136]

The storm broke in October, when Pepys and Deb were discovered in flagrante by an angry and upset Elizabeth. At two o'clock in the morning of 25th October Elizabeth woke her husband in tears to reproach him. The repercussions surrounding this incident were felt for many months. Pepys described a troubled night in November when Elizabeth's fury caused him to weep 'heartily'. This rare admission of crying by the diarist, unaccompanied by his usual hints that crying was shameful, is an indication of the heightened emotional atmosphere. The pattern of behaviour was repeated the following night. Again Pepys 'burst out in tears' and promised to dismiss Deb. When Elizabeth later discovered that Pepys had met the now dismissed Deb she threatened to slit her nose and demanded money from Pepys 'that she might be gone without making any noise, or else protested that she would make all the world know of it.'[137]

At this point Pepys decided to call his friend Will Hewer to arbitrate between the fractious couple. By crying 'like a child' Hewer obtained a temporary peace. The following day Elizabeth again vented her spleen. Pepys again 'by silence and weeping did prevail with her a little to be quiet'. Hewer was summoned again and an uneasy peace ensued. The peace dissolved again in January and marital tension caused Pepys to weep 'for grief'. Discovering her husband thus, Elizabeth softened.[138]

---

[136] *Pepys*, IX, p. 143 (31 March 1668); pp. 244-5 (18-19 June 1668).
[137] *Pepys*, IX, pp. 337-8 (25 October 1668); p. 343 (31 October 1668); pp. 357-8 (10-11 November 1668); p. 367 (19 November 1668).
[138] *Pepys*, IX, p. 369 (20 November 1668); p. 402 (27 December 1668); p. 422 (21 January 1669).

'crying and sobbing', and when she later returned to Pepys she was still crying. The following morning Elizabeth again became tearful, and this time Pepys appears to have been losing his patience for her, dismissively writing that she 'fell into her blubbering again.' Pepys sensed that a 'storm will break out, I know, in a little time.'[136]

The storm broke in October, when Pepys and Deb were discovered in flagrante by an angry and upset Elizabeth. At two o'clock in the morning of 25th October Elizabeth woke her husband in tears to reproach him. The repercussions surrounding this incident were felt for many months. Pepys described a troubled night in November when Elizabeth's fury caused him to weep 'heartily'. This rare admission of crying by the diarist, unaccompanied by his usual hints that crying was shameful, is an indication of the heightened emotional atmosphere. The pattern of behaviour was repeated the following night. Again Pepys 'burst out in tears' and promised to dismiss Deb. When Elizabeth later discovered that Pepys had met the now dismissed Deb she threatened to slit her nose and demanded money from Pepys 'that she might be gone without making any noise, or else protested that she would make all the world know of it.'[137]

At this point Pepys decided to call his friend Will Hewer to arbitrate between the fractious couple. By crying 'like a child' Hewer obtained a temporary peace. The following day Elizabeth again vented her spleen. Pepys again 'by silence and weeping did prevail with her a little to be quiet'. Hewer was summoned again and an uneasy peace ensued. The peace dissolved again in January and marital tension caused Pepys to weep 'for grief'. Discovering her husband thus, Elizabeth softened.[138]

---

[136] *Pepys*, IX, p. 143 (31 March 1668); pp. 244-5 (18-19 June 1668).
[137] *Pepys*, IX, pp. 337-8 (25 October 1668); p. 343 (31 October 1668); pp. 357-8 (10-11 November 1668); p. 367 (19 November 1668).
[138] *Pepys*, IX, p. 369 (20 November 1668); p. 402 (27 December 1668); p. 422 (21 January 1669).

Pepys' references to crying in these turbulent months show that it was induced by emotional discord, and might play a role in negotiations. The tears shed by Pepys, his wife, her companion and their arbitrator were made for a variety of reasons: humiliation, guilt, compassion, sympathy, self-pity, fear and anger. Whether or not any person cried manipulatively is unclear, but given an earlier assertion by Pepys' that Elizabeth had 'without any the least cause she had the cunning to cry a great while and talk and blubber' when in company, suggests that he might have considered this to be plausible.[139]

Dekker's *The Wonderfull Yeare* (1603) was written during a major plague epidemic of the early-seventeenth century. It is composed of various satirical narratives, revolving around people affected by the disease. In his tale of a cobbler Dekker includes many human sounds, and a study of this yields many useful insights into the contemporary use of such sounds, revealing both the motivations to make sounds and perceptions of them (although admittedly from the imagination of one man).[140] Like Bunyan, Dekker demonstrates that he is aware of the multiple motives which cause the same sound, but here the theme is farcical misinterpretation. The omniscient narration allows the reader access to the thoughts and actions of the protagonists, offering insights into their motivations and perceptions.

Believing herself to be dying of the plague the cobbler's wife gathered her neighbours and husband around her. Initially, his wife's affliction induced 'thicke teares' in the cobblers eyes, and 'in their salt water, all his utterance was drownde: which she perceiving, wept as fast as he'. Here we see that weeping is contagious. His weeping was for sadness and a sense of his impending loss. Dekker informs us that the source of her tears may be attributed partly to a guilty conscience: 'At

---

[139] *Pepys*, V, p. 176 (12 June 1664).
[140] Dekker, *The Wonderfull Yeare*, in Wilson (ed.), *Plague Pamphlets*, pp. 47-51. All extracts are taken from these five pages.

last', after 'two or three sighes' she decided to tell her husband of her many infidelities, to salve her conscience; 'as she will soon be out of harms way'. To make her seem more contrite, the wife deliberately wrung her hands whilst she recalled one infidelity. The cobbler's response was that 'hee onely shooke his head at this, and cried humph!' His wife took this 'humph' to indicate tolerance, although Dekker hints that this interpretation was incorrect, that the cobbler was in fact angry. Believing his temper to be benign, his wife proceeded to provide more details. These made him 'looke wilde', but 'being a politicke Cobler, and remembering what piece of work he was to under-laie, stroking his beard ... and giving a nod', the cobbler solicited even more detail from his wife, more than he would have learnt had he shown anger. These silent gestures, Dekker tells the reader, were deliberate, designed 'to drawe out all the corruption of her secret villainies'. His wife talked of another lover, for whom she felt true passion. The cobbler 'cryed oh!', possibly a involuntary remark, and this induced pity in the neighbours gathered around the bed. He moved away slightly, and 'sat quiet as a lambe'. In his wounded and vulnerable state, he chose silence to save face, and to prevent his temper flaring. This action was interpreted by the neighbours as evidence of his patience and they all attempted to soothe him, to stroke his furrowed brow and praise his courage and fortitude. When his silence induced his wife to blurt out even more names and details the cobbler pardoned her. When his wife revealed that she made love with another man in their house, while he was asleep (she was sure of this as 'being over head and eares in sleepe; his snorting gave the signe that he was cock-sure') the cobbler was sure that he had learned the full extent of her promiscuity. The ironic twist to the tale is that the wife did not actually die of the plague, but recovered, to be ostracised by her neighbours, and victimised by the wives of the men with whom she had been unfaithful. The words

which her husband coaxed from her through his skilful nonverbal communication proved to be her undoing.

This tale reveals much about Dekker's understanding of human sounds and silences. He shows that sounds can be misinterpreted or they may hide genuine feelings, that sounds may be employed deliberately, yet be fashioned to appear involuntary. In this manner a skilled user of sounds could control situations by deceiving others about their true state of mind, and this control could elicit desired responses. Had the cobbler reacted violently his wife may not have revealed the details she did; his silence encouraged her to feel free to expose herself without recrimination. According to Reid Barbour, Dekker wrote *The Wonderfull Yeare* consciously as an education in the capacities of people to deliberately subvert or reinforce codes of conduct to achieve particular ends.[141] The wife was deceived by thinking she understood the 'notorious signs' of her husband, and was undone. In telling his story Dekker relied on the readers' awareness that nonverbal communication was a shared resource, but that some people had more scope for utilising it than others.

Characters

Personalities other than that of the cynical manipulator could be revealed through sounds. The way a person used sounds could be revealing; providing valuable evidence of their ability to conform and behave in particular contexts, indicating a natural social ease and popularity. Breaking social rules might be an indication of social ease and confidence, Ryder certainly believed that some of his friends, especially Powell, revelled in their disregard for polite decorum. For the remainder of this chapter I will examine how a person's use of sounds could help project his or her personality.

---

[141] Reid Barbour, *Deciphering Elizabethan Fiction* (London, 1993), p. 127.

Levels of skill in sound use varied. A tendency to stutter or giggle might have been regarded as socially awkward or indicative of timidity. An acquaintance pointed out that when Boswell exclaimed that he was miserable he would laugh loudly. 'Indeed' noted Boswell 'I have often found that when I vented my complaints of melancholy, it appeared somewhat ludicrous and I could not but laugh'.[142] Such gauchness might have indicated nervousness or uncertainty, as Boswell settled into his new social environment. Conduct book compilers detailed sounds which should be avoided as they hinted at a lack of social finesse. Weste warned that hammering words (stammering) or coughing whilst talking 'doth betoken a liers smell', and therefore indicated insincerity.[143] Seager maintained that laughter and stuttering would undermine the credibility of a story.[144] The Earl of Chesterfield advised his son to avoid any ungraceful manner of speaking, such as 'stuttering, muttering, monotony, or drawling' as this would create an unfavourable impression. Such awkwardness was evidence of social unease.[145] Anna Bryson, a historian of conduct works, remarks that sounds like stuttering were 'considered to show a vulgar subjection to impulse and personal eccentricity inconsistent with the self-mastery of the "civil" gentleman.'[146] Chesterfield described the behaviour of 'an awkward fellow', who, when drinking 'infallibly coughs in his glass, and besprinkles the company.'[147] However, it is unlikely that awkward behaviour was universally subjected to condemnation. Lorenzo Magalotti reacted with pity and concern when he encountered the natural philosopher Robert Boyle in 1668 and noticed his speech impediment. Boyle's stammering was so bad

---

[142] *Boswell's London Journal*, p. 236 (14 May 1763).
[143] Weste, *The Booke of Demeanor*, in *The Babees Book*, p. 294.
[144] S[eager], *The Schoole of Vertue*, in *The Babees Book,* p. 348.
[145] John Bradshaw (ed.), *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope Earl of Chesterfield with the Characters*, 3 vols (London, 1913), I, p. 17.
[146] Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998), p. 160.
[147] Bradshaw (ed.), *Letters of the Earl of Chesterfield*, I, pp. 17, 93-4.

that he appeared to be 'constrained by an internal force to swallow his words again and with the words also his breath, so that he seems so near to bursting that it excites compassion in the hearer.'[148] Although Boyle was no raconteur, he was taken seriously as a scientist.

Different characters were apparent within social classes; that the personalities of Dudley Ryder and Samuel Pepys were very different is evident by reading their diary entries. Character could be revealed by the way that a person cried or laughed.[149] In some of his definitions of characters John Earle described the type of laughter associated with them. The 'meer formall Man ... Laughes orderly himself when it comes to his turne.' The staid man 'seldom laughs violently'. A 'piece of wit bursts' the 'flatterer' 'with an overflowing laughter.'[150] For Johnson a 'giggler' was 'idly and foolishly merry'. To James Buchanan giggling was a 'wanton sound'.[151] Erasmus Jones considered giggling to be an 'unecessary Interuption' and should be avoided, as it fits only the 'Company of Gossiping Cousins, and such like'.[152] In Nicholas Breton's *The Good and The Badde* (1616) continual laughter and a proclivity to 'sigh for Love' characterised the 'effeminate foole'.[153] When he contemplated the suicide of a melancholy man at the end of the seventeenth century, Abraham de la Pryme remembered that he had 'scarce ever laugh'd'.[154] Addison noted that '[w]hen we see a Fellow loud and talkative, full of insipid Life and Laughter, we may venture to pronounce him a female Favourite'.[155] Ryder's friend Jackson typically saw 'everything in a

---

[148] W.E. Knowles Middleton (ed. and trans.), *Lorenzo Magalotti at the Court of Charles II His Relazione d'Inghilterra of 1668* (Waterloo, Ontario, 1980), p. 135.
[149] See Thomas, 'The Place of Laughter', p. 77.
[150] Earle, *Microcosmographie (c.1627)*, pp. 40, 149; *Microcosmography,* 1632 edn, pp. 26, 69, 162.
[151] Johnson, *Dictionary* s.v. 'giggler'; Buchanan, *Linguae Britanniae*, s.v. 'giggle'. See also Henry Cockeram, *English Dictionarie* (London, 1623), s.v. 'giggle'.
[152] Jones, *The Man of Manners*, p. 35.
[153] Nicholas Breton, *The Good and The Badde* (London, 1616), p. 31.
[154] Jackson (ed.), *The Diary of Abraham de la Pryme,* p. 94; see also 'A Discontented Man' in Earle, *Microcosmographie c. 1627*, pp. 20-2.
[155] *The Spectator*, no. 128 [Addision] 27 July 1711.

ridiculous light' and laughed much.[156] However, was the behaviour which defined a person's character natural and genuine or learned and affected? The fact that interpretations of characteristics depend largely on the describer, who might have a particularly cynical, or a particularly gullible character, make this question impossible to answer.

It is possible to examine the typologies of people that were developed in early modern literature and to trace the role of sounds in the formation of stereotypes such as the shrew and the hypocrite. Unfavourable comparisons with animals were presented and frequently it was the sounds evoked by the character which triggered connections with particular animals. Those displaying bad table manners were likened to hogs and those with poor nasal control to elephants. Other comparisons were more subtle. Finding the nightingale to be a small bird with a loud voice, John Flavell described her as 'the lively emblem of the formal hypocrite' who was more soundful than substantial. Both the nightingale and the hypocrite craved applause, and are 'little pleased with the silent melody and private pleasure betwixt God and his own soul'. Likewise the blind finch, who sang at midnight, was described as the embodiment of a careless and unconcerned person, who sang while others are silent.[157] Nicholas Breton compared the voice of an 'unquiet woman' to 'the skrieching of an Owle'.[158] Richard Brathwait directed his attention to the shrew, remarking that she even made sounds when asleep; 'she falls into a terrible vaine of snoring and foams at the mouth as if she were possessed ... she is most out of her element when she is most at quiet.' When awake this woman was like 'a bee in a box, for she is ever buzzing.'[159] According to *The Spectator*, a shrewish woman would be 'always busy and barking, ... and

---

[156] *Dudley Ryder*, p. 32 (11 June 1715).
[157] John Flavell, *Occasional Meditations*, attached to *Husbandry Spiritualised*, pp. 234-43.
[158] Breton, *The Good and The Badde*, p. 29.
[159] Brathwayt, *Essaies upon the Five Senses*, pp. 134-5. Similar associations are apparent in William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew* (London, 1623), II, i, 208-10.

live in perpetual Clamour.'[160] In *Poor Robin's True Character of a Schold* (1678) the 'rank scold' was described as 'perpetually hissing, and spitting of venom; a composition of ill-nature and clamour.'[161]

Occupational associations with sounds were also identified. Comments in works from the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries cited sounds which were issued by varieties of worker. The contentment of the whistling rural labourer has been described above and other sounds were associated with other labourers. When he depicted the behaviour of 'People of low Conversation', Erasmus Jones moaned that they 'set up a horrible Laughter' for trivial reasons, arguing that: 'This Humor prevails exceedingly among Ticket-Porters, Operators for the Head and Feet, Journeymen Bakers, and working Bricklayers, with others in the Beer and Beer Taste.'[162] Jones also complained about the laughter of country milk-maids who laughed constantly for little reason and advised his readers to refrain from bawling or hemming after acquaintances on the street 'like a Butcher out of a Tavern Window' and likened the 'fetching of any loud Sighs' at the dinner table to behaviour expected from the apprentice who has 'come on a Message to his Master at an Alehouse.' One who coughed throughout a church service was likened by Jones to a 'Nobleman's Phtisicky Porter, after a Gallon of Strong Beer to his Breakfast.'[163] In the eighteenth-century pamphlet, *Hell upon Earth*, vintners, victuallers and coffee-house proprietors stood 'eternally upon the *Watch* at their Doors and Windows, *hemming* after everyone that passes' in order to attract them in 'and propagate the Doctrine of Drinking.' These 'hems', issued

---

[160] *The Spectator*, no. 209 [Addison] 30 October 1711.
[161] *Poor Robin's True Character of a Schold or, the Shrew's looking-glass* (1678), repr. in Charles Hindley (ed.), *The Old Book Collector's Miscellany: Or, a Collection of Readable Print of Literary Rarities*, 3 vols (London, 1871-3), II, p. 1.
[162] Jones, *The Man of Manners*, pp. 8, 38, 59.
[163] *ibid.*, pp. 1, 8, 32.

from the threshold of their establishment, carried a hint of challenge and a hint of temptation.[164]

Some civic officials were thought to flaunt their authority through an extravagantly exaggerated use of sounds. In *The London Spy* Ned Ward described the throat clearing 'hem' of watchmen and constables as they strode London's streets in proprietorial fashion. Ward illustrated these characters as stupid and ineffectual men who took an unwarranted pride in their positions and cultivated a misplaced sense of superiority. Ward's 'well fed' constable made a 'hem' as he clapped 'his painted sceptre to the ground as hard as a paver does with his rammer'.[165] Although a fictional account, Ward's description of these sounds suggests that some figures of authority delighted in displaying their power.[166] When issuing their owyes some town criers seemed to enjoy giving emphasis to their role. The Yorkshire antiquarian Abraham de la Pryme was bemused by the spectacle of the gavelage procession held by the Lincolnshire corporation of Broughton in April 1697. Accompanied by fiddlers and a base viol the crier twice cried 'with a strang sort of singing voice, high and low - Whay! whay! whay! Pay you gavelage, ha ... with the greatest majesty and gravity imaginable'.[167]

An unflattering repertoire of sounds were also attributed to some members of the professional classes. When describing 'A yong raw Preacher' John Earle compared him to 'a bird not yet fledg'd', chirping on a hedge.[168] Philip Stubbes pilloried smug lawyers, who were polite in the presence of their clients 'but immediatly after, their clients being gon, the[y] laugh in their sleeves to see how

---

[164] *Hell upon Earth: or the Town in an Uproar* (1729), facs edn, Marriage, Sex, and the Family in England, 1660-1800 (New York, 1985), p. 11.
[165] Ward, *The London-Spy,* repr. Hyland, pp. 35-8.
[166] For an account of the behaviour flaunted by members of the Cambridge proctor's watch see Alexandra Shepard, 'Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England, with special reference to Cambridge, c.1560-1640' (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Cambridge, 1998), p. 161.
[167] Jackson (ed.), *Diary of Abraham de la Pryme*, p. 126.
[168] Earle, *Microcosmographie* (c.1627), p. 4.

pretily they fetch such sommes of money'.[169] To the author of *Mirth in Ridicule* 'The lawyer laughs each Term at Golden Fees ... Deaf'ning the Crowd with noisy Emptiness'.[170] Criticising the laughter of newly rich tradesmen and their families, Erasmus Jones complained that at their table 'Confusion, and loud Laughter, in which the Maids, who are waiting at Table, bear a part, is heard at Dinner-time'.[171]

During the eighteenth century an increasing emphasis was placed on class-based variations in the form and context of laughter. The son of the Earl of Manchester was deemed to be an unfit candidate for an ambassador because he laughed loudly 'like an ordinary body'.[172] The views of the Earl of Chesterfield, as expressed in the letters to his son, are an extreme manifestation of this shift. In addition to his reiteration of the view that immoderate laughter was vulgar, declaring that '[f]requent and loud laughter is the characteristic of folly and ill manners', Chesterfield also frequently expressed distaste for the sound of laughter, 'the disagreeable noise', stating that 'there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill bred, as audible laughter.' For Chesterfield laughter divided the polite from the impolite; laughter was 'the manner in which the mob express their silly joy at silly things' and was 'low and unbecoming'.[173] Chesterfield contrasted the proper behaviour of gentlemen with the behaviour expected from the common folk.

Context was a strong influence on the use and perception of nonverbal sounds in early modern England. Contemporary comments suggest that the ability or willingness to behave in particular ways was governed by both individual and

---

[169] Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomy of Abuses* (1583), ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, The New Shakspere Society, 2 vols (London, 1877-82) I, p. 118.
[170] *Mirth in Ridicule, or a satyr against Immoderate Laughing* (London, 1708), p. 19.
[171] Jones, *Man of Manners*, p. 8.
[172] Thomas, 'The Place of Laughter', p. 79.
[173] Bradshaw (ed.), *Letters of the Earl of Chesterfield,* I, pp. 94, 164, 454. See also Virgil B. Heltzel, 'Chesterfield and the Anti-Laughter Tradition', *Modern Philology*, 26 (1929), 73-90; E. Sprague Allen, 'Chesterfield's Objection to Laughter', *Modern Language Notes*, 38 (1923), 279-87.

group concerns. Whether or not a person controlled his or her issuance of sounds was regarded as indicative of their personality, socio-economic circumstances, seriousness, maturity or gender. Peoples' skill in using sounds to gain social advancement varied.

The use and perception of nonverbal sounds provides a test for Elias' theory of a 'civilizing process', which is found wanting for various reasons. Firstly, Elias concentrates on the ways that people inhibited their behaviour in order to advance in society, yet behaviour could also be expressive, and sounds could indicate special personality traits. Not all sounds were made or restricted to allow a person to conform to societal demands. Some people even developed magnetism by showing a cavalier disregard for the rules which were applied to particular sounds. Secondly, Elias' view of a linear, elite-driven process which was widely encompassing does not stand up to scrutiny. Fashions of behaviour apparently swept through early modern English society. By the eighteenth century there was an increasing interest in the ways that gentlemanly behaviour contrasted to the bestial behaviour of the common working man, especially in urban societies.[174] More research needs to be carried out to discover the ways that behaviour amongst peers differed from behaviour in front of inferiors or superiors, and to explore the differences between public and private usage of sounds. It would be especially interesting to consider reactions to extreme situations which temporarily destabilised people, causing them to lack emotional control, such as witnessing hilarious incidents, or suffering the loss of kith or kin. It is likely that such research would further reveal the overly simplistic nature of Elias' theory.

---

[174] Anna Bryson, 'The Rhetoric of Status: Gesture, Demeanor and the Image of the Gentleman in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England', in Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (eds), *Renaissance Bodies. The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660* (London, 1990), pp. 138-40

CHAPTER 4 - A DRY COUGH IS THE TRUMPETER OF DEATH: SIGNALLING BY SOUND.

Sounds which were perceived by the hearer to signal something are the subject of this chapter. Sound signals indicated that something had happened or was due to happen and such sounds were apprehended consciously.[1] Most of the signals discussed here were issued deliberately under the direction of others, to indicate the passage of time, to warn of danger, to broadcast news or to command respect. However, the chapter begins with sounds which were not issued with a deliberate aim to signal a meaning, but were perceived to have one nonetheless, such as the cawing of ravens or inexplicable knockings.

(I) INCIDENTAL SOUNDS THOUGHT TO CARRY MESSAGES

In the early modern period some of the sounds of the natural environment and the body were thought to convey meanings. Warnings about future health and prosperity were perceived in the chirrups of insects and the chirps of birds and indications about physical health were taken from bodily sounds. Some signals were believed to herald inclement weather and others to indicate divine pleasure or wrath. This section addresses three types of signal: sounds which were thought to tell the time or forecast weather; sounds taken to be ill omens; and sounds heard as symptoms of disease.

Nature's clock: time and the elements

Steven Feld described the ways that the Kaluli listened for bird sounds to structure their time. The Kaluli remark that 'people are like birds; we get up with

---

[1] Raymond Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World* (New York, 1977), p. 10.

their calls in the morning and sleep when they do.' Women wake to the sounds of the Brown Orioles and the New Guinea Friarbirds, and it is time for the children to arise when the Hooded Butcherbird calls. Seasonal shifts are also temporally located by hearing the sounds of a particular bird. The season which starts in April and ends in September, for example, does not begin until the Rainbow Bee Eater is heard. The season which starts in either October or November and continues until mid March comes when the Mountain Pigeons are conspicuously vocal.[2]

In early modern England the sounds of nature were also taken to indicate, *inter alia*, the change of seasons or the time of day, especially in rural settlements.[3] In the early seventeenth-century Thomas Middleton described the 'vigilant cock' as 'The morning's herald and the ploughman's clock', and many rural dwellers would have woken to this sound during the period.[4] The fretful dawn dispute between Romeo and Juliet concerning the nightingale and the lark highlights the symbolic roles of their sounds;

> JULIET: Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day. It was the nightingale, and not the lark ...
> ROMEO: It was the lark, the herald of the morn; No nightingale...[5]

The sound of the cuckoo was thought to herald the start of spring, and on 13 May 1738 Stephen Monteage, the London based accountant of the South Sea Company, recorded in the margin of his diary, 'Hear'd a Cucko 1st this year'.[6] Although it is

---

[2] Steven Feld, *Sound and Sentiment. Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*, 2nd edn (Philadelphia, 1990), p. 61.
[3] John Gay, *Rural Sports: A Poem* (London, 1713) lines 46-7.
[4] Thomas Middleton, *The Triumphs of Love and Antiquity, and honourable Solemnitie performed through the Citie at the confirmation of Sir W. Cockayne, in the Office of Lord Maior of London* (1619) in Arthur Henry Bullen (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Middleton,* 8 vols (London, 1885-6), VII, p. 320. See also Henry Bourne, *Antiquitates Vulgares; Or, the Antiquities of the Common People* (Newcastle, 1725), p. 38.
[5] William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* (London, 1599), III, v, 1-7. For an interesting consideration of the role of natural sounds in time telling see D. R. Woolf, 'Speech, Text, and Time: the Sense of Hearing and the Sense of the Past in Renaissance England', *Albion*, 18 (1986), 159-94.
[6] London, GL, MS 205/2, 'The Diary of Stephen Monteage', fol. 93 (13 May 1738). For an account of why the cuckoo, and not the nightingale, became 'herbinger unto the joyfull spring', see Richard Niccols, *The Cuckow* (London, 1607).

likely that rural dwellers were more attuned to the rhythms of nature, clearly such sounds were also meaningful for urbanites.

Weather forecasting

Weather forecasting was probably the most widely practised method of predicting future events by the interpretation of sounds in early modern England. Indications of favourable or unfavourable weather were valuable for those working the land, for example, to help time the hay-making. Sounds of nature were used as signals for action or delay and knowledge of them would have been passed down through the generations.[7] Thomas Hill, author of husbandry treatises, recognised particular sounds to be the signals of fine or foul weather. Besides noticing the 'much mooving of the leaves' in woods prior to a tempest, Hill also recorded different possible outcomes heralded by a calling crow, depending on the manner and time of the call. A crow 'timely calling in the morning declareth faire weather ... but crowing softly in the evening, declareth a tempest to ensue', and a crow calling 'hastily twice or thrice together', would signal a tempest. The sounds of various creatures appeared amongst the 'manifest signes which declare raine to follow' described by Hill. Rain was expected when any birds flying together made 'a greater noise in the flying than customable'. The type of bird in the flock determined the severity of the expected downpour; chattering magpies heralded a shower but the loud noise of geese 'doe signifie a tempest to ensue.' Frogs were also believed to signal rain through an increasing volubility of croaking.[8] Gervase Markham argued that careful listening to the type and duration of cries made by crows, ravens and sparrows allowed the weather to be predicted. Crows that cried long, ravens which croaked 'with a hollow or sounding voyce', sparrows which

---

[7] Particular bird sounds informed the Kaluli when the pandanus fruit was ripe, Feld, *Sound and Sentiment*, p. 79.

[8] Thomas Hill, *Certaine husbandly conjectures of dearth and plenty*, annexed to *A profitable instruction to the perfect ordering of bees*, 2nd edn (London, 1608), pp. 77-8.

chirped 'earley in the morning', and cattle which lowed 'much upward' whilst grazing, were all, according to Markham, 'most certain signes of raine, which will presently follow.'[9] Forecasting abilities were also associated with bells and clocks. Hill noted that 'the sound of bels or clockes heard further off than customably, doth declare raine to follow, except the same be caused by wind'.[10] On 17 July 1664 Ralph Josselin highlighted the localised nature of much of this knowledge when he noted in his diary that the 'Coxal [Coggleshall, a neighbouring village] sermon bell sounded very light for morning sermon into my studdy, which is accounted a signe of raine.'[11] During her visit to Kendal in 1697, Celia Fiennes learnt that local wisdom held that the roaring of the River Can afforded climatic clues; if the roar was most audible on the north side of town it would be a fair day, if it roared loudest in the south then rain would fall.[12]

Symptoms

Auscultation, or the careful listening by doctors to barely perceptible sounds was discussed in Chapter 2. In the following discussion I will focus on common reactions to the highly audible sounds of disease, such as coughs, hiccups and belches, and examine what they were thought to indicate about the person who issued them.

In the early modern period hiccups and various types of cough were regarded with particular dread.[13] A proverb collected in the 1670s alerted people to the ill-consequences of a dry cough, described as 'the Trumpeter of Death'.[14]

---

[9] Gervase Markham, *Country Gentleman's Companion,* 2 vols (London, 1753), II, Sig. B2.
[10] Hill, *Certaine husbandly conjectures*, pp. 73-4.
[11] *Josselin*, p. 510 (17 July 1664).
[12] Christopher Morris (ed.), *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes* (London, 1947), p. 191.
[13] Noel Chomel, *Dictionaire Oeconomique, or a Family Dictionary* (London, 1725), s.v. 'sneeze'.
[14] J[ohn] R[ay], *A Collection of English Proverbs Digested into a Convenient Method for the Speedy finding any one upon occasion; With Short Annotations* (Cambridge, 1670), p. 5; Robert Codrington, *A Collection of Many Select, and Excellent Proverbs out of Several Languages* (London, 1672), no. 22.

Amongst the symptoms displayed by John Smith, fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge, in the 1640s, was 'a husky cough', which baffled and worried his friends.[15] Pepys described the fatal illness of Sir John Lawson in June 1665, following the knee injury he sustained when fighting the Dutch, key symptoms of which were fever, thrush and 'a Hickup'. Pepys feared the worst; 'all three together; which are, it seems, very bad symptoms', and when he visited Lawson on 19th June his hiccups were so frequent that Pepys could 'have little discourse with him'. Within the week Lawson was dead.[16] When Sir John Mennes was taken with hiccups the following year Pepys feared that this was 'a very bad sign.'[17] Minister Henry Newcome recorded the sudden death of Mr Higinson, 'a precious minister' of Leicester who, following a bout of sickness, was lauding his recovery to a neighbour when he was stricken with a bout of hiccups. Higinson uttered 'Now I am gone to the dogs', returned home and died.[18]

Sounds were also thought to provide clues about the cause of illness. Grumbling stomachs and belching, for example, were taken to be signs of poor or excessive diets.[19] In his typically jaundiced style, Phillip Stubbes wondered 'who is sicklier then they that fare deliciously everyday? who is corrupter? who belcheth more?'[20] The sounds made by suspected victims of witchcraft were occasionally cited as evidence of foul play. The bewitched were reported to screech, cry out in pain, gnash their teeth or engage in bouts of hysterical laughter or inconsolable

---

[15] Alexander Taylor (ed.), *The Works of Symon Patrick, sometime Bishop of Ely*, 9 vols (Oxford, 1858), IX, p. 420.
[16] *Pepys*, VI, p. 122 (3 June 1665); p. 131 (17 June 1665); p. 132 (19 June 1665); p. 138 (25 June 1665).
[17] *Pepys*, VII, p. 261 (26 August 1666). Mennes' illness did not prove to be fatal.
[18] Richard Parkinson (ed.), *The Autobiography of Henry Newcome, M.A.*, The Chetham Society, 26 (Manchester, 1852), p. 87 (2 March 1658).
[19] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1621), p. 231; Chomel, *Dictionaire Oeconomique*, s.v. 'belching'.
[20] Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomy of Abuses* (1583), ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, The New Shakspere Society, 2 vols (London, 1877-82), I, p. 106.

weeping.[21] Thomas Isham, son and heir of Sir Justinian, recounted a report of bewitched children who 'barked and mewed like dogs and cats.'[22]

Ill omens

When some people heard sounds made by certain creatures they interpreted them as dire warnings.[23] The 'Death Watch', described in the seventeenth century as 'the little clicking sound heard often in many rooms, somewhat resembling that of a Watch', was thought to be an ill omen, or even to predict death.[24] Another portent of death was the sound of crickets which were heard to chirrup inside the house, but which could not be located.[25] The unseasonable crowing of a cock, especially if heard prior to embarking on a journey, was though to herald bad news.[26] These warnings were not always indiscriminate; their meaning could have depended on the circumstances of the listener. A cuckoo heard before a nightingale in spring would bode ill fortune for the married; its 'hoarse voice' was thought to be 'fatall to the wedded eare'.[27] These complex ciphers might apply only to particular people or contexts.

---

[21] James Raine Jnr (ed.), *Depositions from the Castle of York, relating to offences committed in the Northern Counties in the seventeenth century*, The Surtees Society, 40 (Durham, 1861), pp. 7, 65, 75, 92, 176-7; J.A. Sharpe, 'Disruption in the Well-Ordered Household: Age, Authority, and Possessed Young People', in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle (eds), *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 197-201.

[22] Norman Marlow (trans.), *The Diary of Thomas Isham of Lamport (1658-81) - 1671-3* (Farnborough, 1971), p. 189 (1 February 1673).

[23] For examples of fearing 'scritch' or 'screech' owls see *The Spectator*, no. 7 [Addison] 8 March 1711; William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London, 1600), V, i, 365-7 .

[24] Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica or enquiries into very many received tenants and commonly presumed truths* (1672), in Charles Sayle (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Browne*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1912), I, p. 299; *The Spectator*, no. 7 [Addison] 8 March 1711; John Gay, *The Shepherd's Week in Six pastorals* (1714), repr. in John Underhill (ed.), *The Poetical Works of John Gay*, 2 vols (London, 1893), I, p. 101.

[25] Gay, *The Shepherd's Week*, in John Underhill (ed.), *The Poetical Works*, I, p. 101.

[26] John Aubrey, *Remaines of Gentilsme and Judasisme* (1688), ed. James Britten, Publications of the Folk-Lore Society, 4 (London, 1881), p. 196.

[27] Edward Phillips, *The Mysteries of Love and Eloquence, or, the Arts of Wooing and Complementing* (London, 1658), p. 4; Niccols, *The Cuckow*, pp. 2-3.

Strange or unaccountable sounds such as mysterious knocks and scratchings were also taken to be harbingers of death and ill-fortune, and even inanimate objects were thought to impart dire warnings.[28] One afternoon, Walter Gale twice heard the town clock strike three and took this, together with 'the crickets coming to the house' to be 'sure presages of my sister's death.'[29] When Sarah Harrold, wife of a Manchester wig-maker, put a new pot in to wash in July 1712

> It gave a crack. What['s] that?' said she, 'is that the pot?' Says Sarah Sharples, 'Ay, and it's a sign of death,' says she. So as the[y] was talking it gave two cracks more. At last my wife took up the pot and rung it and it is as sound as can be.[30]

Thunder and celestial phenomena such as meteorites were often taken to be messages from God. One pamphlet author, when describing the sounds of what seems to have been a meteor fall in 1642, recalled Luke 21:11 ('great signs shall there be from heaven') and connected the incident to the 'warres in Bohemia', and implied that God was indicating approaching troubles on English soil.[31] Thomas Willsford held that thunder in winter was 'ominous, portending factions, tumults, and bloody wars'.[32] The severity of a tempest might have been taken to indicate God's wrath. Ralph Thoresby heard a terrible storm in 1678 which woke 'very hard sleepers with fear' and caused some to start up 'half distracted, thinking it to

---

[28] *The Spectator*, no. 12 [Addison] 14 March 1711.
[29] R.W. Blencowe (ed.), *Extracts from the Journal of Walter Gale*, Sussex Archaeological Collections, 9 (London, 1857), 182-207, p. 191 (14 January 1751).
[30] *Edmund Harrold his book of Remarks and observations,* extracts repr. as 'Diary of a Manchester Wig-Maker 1712-15' in John Harland (comp. and ed.), *Collectanea relating to Manchester and its Neighbourhood at Various Periods*, Chetham Society, old ser., 68 (Manchester, 1866),172-207, pp. 180-181 (26 July 1712) [corrected by reference to an extract in Ralph Houlbrooke, *English Family Life, 1576-1716, an Anthology from Diaries* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 96-7].
[31] *A Signe from Heaven: Or, a Fearful and Terrible Noise heard in the Ayre at Alborow in the County of Suffoke* (London, 1642), pp.1-2.
[32] Thomas Willsford, *Natures Secrets. Or, The Admirable and wonderfull History Of the generation of Meteors* (London, 1658), p. 113; See also Philip C. Almond, *Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 114.

be the day of judgement'.[33] A proverbial association was made between a 'quiet conscience' and the ability to sleep during thunderstorms.[34]

Personal and anecdotal evidence led some people to be convinced about the truth of these messages. Alexander Ross asserted that reading ominous signs in the screeching of owls and the howling of dogs was 'no Gentil superstition ... but a truth manifested by long experience', and invoked his own experience of hearing a 'groaning' owl before two eminent people died.[35] Some sought logical or rational reasons as to why such sounds should carry meanings, theorising, for example, that some animals have an acute sense of smell and when they scent death ravens would warn by croaking three times and dogs by unaccountable howling.[36]

People did not necessarily apply such beliefs consistently during their lives. Ralph Josselin had a curiously ambivalent attitude to the sound of thunder; when he was concerned about the harvest he welcomed it and when he was concerned about his soul he feared it as a sign of Armageddon.[37] Some were selective about which sounds they heard as signals. John Gaule argued that as particular superstitions were followed by particular people depending on their nationality, sex, age, and occupation, they could not be quantified.[38] John Evelyn, whilst believing that storms were portentously significant, also denied that the sound of 'death-Watches'

---

[33] Joseph Hunter (ed.), *The diary of Ralph Thoresby FRS, author of the topography of Leeds (1677-1724)* 2 vols (London, 1830), I, p. 10 (19 January 1678), p. 55 (26 August 1680), p. 142 (12 November 1682).

[34] Thomas Fuller, *Gnomologia: Adagies and Proverbs; Wise Sentences and Witty Sayings, Ancient and Modern, Foreign and British* (London, 1732), p. 14, no. 735.

[35] A[lexander] R[oss], *Arcana Microcosmi: Or, The hid Secrets of Man's Body discovered; In an Anatomical Dual between Aristotle and Galen concerning the Parts thereof* (London, 1652), pp. 218-20.

[36] [Daniel Defoe imitator], *The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Duncan Campbell, A Gentleman, who, tho' Deaf and Dumb, writes down any Stranger's name at first Sight; with their future Contingencies of Fortune* (1720), in *Miscellaneous Works of Daniel Defoe*, 7 vols (London, c. 1893), VI, p. 178.

[37] *Josselin*, p. 448 (2 July 1659); p. 255 (23 August 1651); p. 335 (8 December 1654); p. 547 (4 July 1669).

[38] John Gaule, *The Mag-astro-mances, or the Magicall-Astrologicall-Divines Posed, and Puzzled* (London, 1652), pp. 181-2.

was meaningful.[39] Edmund Harrold asked several acquaintances their opinion about the sounds made when his wife washed her pot and found disagreement; 'Some says it's ominous, others not; but I have noted it down in order to observe the event concerning theirs or our families to come.'[40]

In the mid-sixteenth century such beliefs were denounced as foolish superstition and the number of dissenting voices increased during the early modern period.[41] Reginald Scot was strong in his assertion that 'To prognosticate that ghests approach at your house, upon the chattering of [mag]pies ... is altogether vanitie and superstition'.[42] John Gaule argued that superstitions were 'vain observations', and Thomas Nashe claimed that without religion people would place too much importance on the sounds of the 'Scritch-owle', the nightingale and croaking frogs.[43] Pepys described as 'foolery' the suggestion that the sudden thunder which was heard on the coronation of Charles II was 'notice of God's blessing'.[44] Like Evelyn, Thomas Browne also drew attention to the fact that the 'Dead Watch' was simply an insect, and 'nothing of rational presage', hoping that extinguishing 'the terrifying apprehensions hereof, might prevent the passions of the heart and many cold sweats in Grandmothers and Nurses, who in the sickness of children are so startled with these noises.'[45] Joseph Addison highlighted the irrationality of fearing these sounds more than genuine signals of danger, noting that the sound of crickets struck more terror than roaring lions, and used the

---

[39] *Evelyn*, III, p. 316 (17 February 1662); p. 325 (10 June 1662); V, p. 2 (11 January 1690).
[40] John Harland (ed.), *Edmund Harrold: his book,* pp. 180-1 Although Sarah did become ill shortly after this incident, and was dead within four months, Harrold did not relate her demise to the sound in his diary (Details taken from the extract in Houlbrooke, *Family Life*, pp. 98-9)
[41] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic. Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (Harmondsworth, 1973), pp. 747-51.
[42] Reginald Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London, 1584), p. 170.
[43] Thomas Nashe, *Terrors of the Night or a discourse of apparitions* (1594), Nashe, *Works*, I, p. 386.
[44] *Pepys*, II, p. 86 (23 April 1661).
[45] *Evelyn*, III, p. 325 (10 June 1662); Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, in *Works*, I, p. 300.

example of a soldier who looked 'pale upon a little scratching at his door, who the day before had march'd against a battery of cannon.'[46]

Some types of people were considered especially prone to attach a portentous significance to superstitious sounds. Thomas Dekker ascribed the fear of the 'scritch-owl' to the '*silly* Countryman' and in 1725 antiquarian Henry Bourne denounced such beliefs as heathenish and claimed that although

> Omens and Prognostications of Things are still in the Mouths of all, [they are] only observed by the Vulgar. In Country places, especially they are in great Repute, and are the Directors of several Actions of Life; being looked on by them as Presages of Things future.[47]

Many distanced themselves from those who believed such indications, but fell short of outright denial. Some claimed to have logical and rational reasons to justify their belief in the truth of these messages, others used logical and rational reasons to denounce them.

To many the sounds of the natural world were merely incidental, but others took heed of the messages they were believed to carry. With other forms of sound signals there was no ambiguity. These signals, issued by people who deliberately intended to communicate a message, are the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

(II) SOUNDS ISSUED DELIBERATELY TO COMMUNICATE MESSAGES

In early modern England sound signals could be issued using a variety of instruments, ranging from simple wooden clappers, needing little or no skill to sound, to the more complicated trumpets, which were sounded only by skilled

---

[46] *The Spectator*, no. 12 [Addison] 14 March 1711.
[47] Frank Percy Wilson (ed.), *The Plague Pamphlets of Thomas Dekker* (Oxford, 1925), p. 10; Bourne, *Antiquitates Vulgares*, pp. 70-2.

individuals. The signals made on these instruments could be in the form of simple, repetitive sounds, or could form a more elaborate and complex code; a drum, for example, could be beaten haphazardly, or used to perform a complex marching beat. Some instruments, such as handbells, were particularly portable, and therefore valuable for those wishing to make localised signals. Some instruments, such as church bells, were static. The aural range of signalling apparatus was also variable. The sound signals which had the potential to be heard over the longest range were those issued high in the air, through cannon fire and bellringing.

Due to their availability and audible range the most important signalling instruments were parish bells. No instruments could rival the ability of the church bells to communicate to the masses as their sound could be heard across most of the country.[48] In 1552 Bishop Latimer had declared that if all the bells of England were rung simultaneously there would be 'almost no place but some bells might be heard there.'[49] By the mid-sixteenth century the majority of parishes had a least three bells and a clock mechanism and as the period progressed the quantity and quality of parish bells increased across the country. While there were on average three bells in 1552 inventories (with many in a bad state of repair), by 1724 the commissioners reported many more bells.[50] A substantial proportion of parish expenses were incurred by the casting, recasting, maintenance, tuning, repair and ringing of bells.[51] Hung in a steeple, or tower, usually the tallest building of the

---

[48] Francis Bacon was aware that bells which hung high in the air, such as parish bells, would produce a louder sound that bells which were fixed or struck with a hammer. Translation of 'The History and First Inquisition of Sound and Hearing', in Basil Montagu (ed.), *The Works of Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England*, 16 vols (London, 1825-36) XV, p. 230

[49] George Elwes Corrie (ed.), *Sermons of Hugh Latimer, sometime bishop of Worcester, Martyr, 1555*, The Parker Society, 23 (Cambridge, 1844), p. 498.

[50] For example St Michael's in Lambourne (in Berkshire) had four bells and a sanctus bell in 1552, five great bells and one small in 1636 and at least eight bells by 1742, F. Sharpe, *The Church Bells of Berkshire. Their inscriptions and founders*, 2nd edn (Bath, 1970), p. 165.

[51] J. S. Craig, 'Co-operation and Initiatives - Elizabethan churchwardens' accounts and the parish accounts of Mildenhall', *Social History,* 18 (1990), 357-80; p. 377; Over eleven pounds were spent in 1567 to cast the great bell of St Lawrence, Reading, Sharpe, *Church Bells of Berkshire*, p. 208.

parish, the sound of the bells would have travelled far. Without the steeple the sound would be compromised, and major problems ensued when steeples fell into disrepair. Following the collapse of a steeple, bell-deprivation sometimes lasted for several months or years. Nine years after the fall of the steeple in Shillington, Bedfordshire, the bells were still stored in a box in the church. When the tower of St. Edmund, Salisbury fell in 1653 the parishioners responded generously with donations, but the parish still needed to levy a rate over the next decade to cover the cost of repairs.[52]

John Donne recognised the instant attraction of ringing, asking '[w]ho bends not his *eare* to any *bell*, which upon any occasion rings?'[53] Bells could be rung in a number of ways and each way produced a different sound and listeners would have distinguished the sound of large bells from small bells. Time could be regularly chimed by the means of clock hammers which were attached to the exterior of one or more bells and worked by a wound mechanism, or on an ad hoc basis when the clerk or sexton pulled the bell rope.[54] If a rope was attached to its clapper the bell might be sounded by tugging on it. (see fig. 5, Marcellus Laroon's town crier appears to be ringing the bell by this method.) Such 'clocking' or 'clappering' was often forbidden as it weakened the bell. At a vestry meeting of 1593 the vicar of St. Lawrence's in Reading complained about 'the slothfulness of the Sextine in times past', who had tolled the bell by the clapper rope, which had

---

[52] L. H. Chambers (ed.), 'Bedfordshire Bells, c. 1710', *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society*, 12 (Aspley Guise, 1928),99-101, p. 101; John Charles Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts from the fourteenth century to the close of the seventeenth century* (London, 1913), p. 75. See also the agreement of the parishioners of St Lawrence's, Reading in the seventeenth century, in Sharpe, *Church Bells of Berkshire*, pp. 225, 228.

[53] Neil Rhodes (ed.), *John Donne. Selected prose* (London, 1987), p. 126.

[54] G.P. Elphick, *Sussex Bells and Belfries* (Chichester, 1970), p. 196; *Low-Life; or one half of the world knows not how the Other Half Live ... in the Twenty-four Hours, between Saturday-Night and Monday-Morning. In a true Description of a Sunday, as it is usually spent within the Bills of Mortuality*, 3rd edn (London, 1764), p. 64, between two and three o'clock on Sunday afternoon 'People whose daily business is to wind up Church Clocks [are] going their Rounds.'

fig. 5, Marcellus Laroon, *Town Crier Tolling a Bell and Reading from a Paper*

fig. 5, Marcellus Laroon, *Town Crier Tolling a Bell and Reading from a Paper*

since been removed to prevent 'anie such Idle sorte' of ringing.[55] A different sound would have been produced by a bell hung on a wheel which swung when the wheel mechanism was moved by pulling a rope attached to it. Each hour was struck on the exterior of the town bell of Amersham, Buckinghamshire, which was cast in 1682. The bell was rung by swinging it for market times each Tuesday and was also available to ring as a fire alarm when needed.[56] Swinging a bell hung on a wheel created joyous sounds, suitable for celebrations, but jangling and clanging bells warned that something was amiss. Sets of bells were 'fired' by sounding them simultaneously to commemorate the failed gunpowder plot of 1605.[57] Due to their prominent use for disseminating public information church bells dominate the following discussion. Whilst an attempt will be made to separate the ecclesiastical functions performed by ringing from secular ones, often the distinction is not clear.

The functions of public signals

In public spaces, such as streets and markets, sounds were made in order to inform and organise citizens. Public signals needed to be particularly loud and have an instant appeal in order to be heard above extraneous noises, such as street cries and traffic. In *Elements of Speech* (1669) William Holder identified a variety of ways that sounds could be used to signal messages and that

> Communication may be performed at a distance by Hearing ... Thousands of Signes may be invented and agreed upon, and learnt, and practised. Thus the Drum and Trumpet by their several Sounds, serve for many kinds of Advertisements in Military affairs: and Bells serve to proclaim a scare-fire, and (in some places) Water-Breaches; The departure of a Man, Woman, or Child; time of Divine Service; the hour of the day; day of the Moneth, etc.[58]

---

[55] Sharpe, *Church Bells of Berkshire*, pp. 210-11.
[56] Percival Price, *Bells and Man* (Oxford, 1983), p. 144.
[57] George Smith Tyack, *A Book about Bells* (London, 1898), p. 243.
[58] William Holder, *Elements of Speech: An Essay of Inquiry into the Natural Production of Letters: with An Appendix Concerning Persons Deaf and Dumb* (London, 1669), pp. 4-5.

The versatility of sound signals makes it difficult to isolate discrete categories of signal types. Whilst acknowledging significant overlap, I will consider sound signals by examining how they were used to advertise or warn, to broadcast news or to summon, and to mark temporal, social and spatial divisions.

Advertising and warning

Street traders cried out to advertise their services and wares, and some augmented the voice with instruments such as bells and clappers. Piemen and postmen rang bells; singing-glass vendors, toy sellers and sow gelders blew horns.[59] (See fig. 6) The tinker's instrumentation was improvised and clamorous; he would 'tink' with his hammer on a pot or kettle.[60] (See fig. 7) In order to ensure the efficient removal of waste and avoid the creation of dunghills it was important that citizens knew when waste would be removed. An Act for the Disposal of Waste (1662) ordered that scavengers and rakers

> shall every day except Sundays bring carts, dung-pots or other fitting carriages where such carriages can pass and shall at their approach make distinct and loud noise by a bell horn clapper or otherwise and make the like noise in every ... alley ... into which the said carts cannot pass and abide there a convenient time.[61]

The scavenger of the London ward of Queenhithe was expected to 'Promise to Give notice by Clapper or Bell ... to the Inhabitants of the said Ward for bringing out their said Soil' and this practice was copied by other towns.[62]

---

[59] Richard B. Schwartz, *Daily Life in Johnson's London* (Madison, Wis.,1983), p. 18; Sean Shesgreen (ed.), *The Criers and Hawkers of London, Engravings and Drawings by Marcellus Laroon* (Aldershot, 1990), pp. 144-5, 152-3; Francis Grose, *The Olio: Being a Collection of Essays etc* (posth., London, 1792), p. 210.

[60] Shesgreen (ed), *Criers and Hawkers of London*, pp. 182-3; Tom Brown, *Amusements Serious and Comical. Calculated for the Meridian of London* (London, 1700), p. 21.

[61] Cited by Liza Picard, *Restoration London* (London, 1997), p. 16.

[62] London, GL, MS 4829, Queenhithe Wardmote Inquest Book, 1667-1746, fols 92, 99v, 111, 169; see also William Henry Pyne, *The Costumes of Great Britain* (London, 1808), s.v. 'Dustman', plate 28. For the scavenger Lewes' use of a bell see Verena Smith (ed.), *The Town Book of Lewes 1702-1837*, Sussex Record Society, 69 (Lewes, 1973), p. 46.

fig. 6, Marcellus Laroon, *Horse leech and Cow doctor* [sow gelder] (1688)

A Braſs Pott or an Iron Pott to mend
Rabiller les Poelles les Marmites & les Chaudrons
Conciа caldare candelieri e Padelle

A. Mauron delin: *P. Tempest ex: Cum privilegio.*

fig. 7, Marcellus Laroon, *A Brass Pot or an Iron Pott to mend* (1711)

Portable equipment, such as the scavenger's bell, had a short audible range, and could not effectively warn large numbers of citizens who were scattered over a great distance. Gun and cannon fire would be audible for miles. The fortifications at Dover Castle provided both security for the port and an early warning system if enemy fleets were sighted at sea. Visiting the castle at the close of the sixteenth century Swiss traveller Thomas Platter observed that from there 'the whole county could be warned by gunshots and beacons'.[63] Instruments which produced particularly piercing or booming sounds, such as horns, trumpets and drums, were invaluable to those attempting to manage the movement of people and animals in particularly noisy environments such as the battlefield and the hunting ground.[64] When used in battle, trumpets were generally reserved for cavalry purposes, where their piercing notes would be audible over the sounds of pounding horses hooves.[65] Marine environments demanded especially loud and sudden signals, such as gun and cannon shots, which would be audible against the wind in the sails, the crash of the sea and the bustle of people.

To avoid large-scale disasters and to ensure the rapid assembly of people, signals which warned of immediate threats to communal safety, such as fires, floods and sieges, needed to be recognised instantly.[66] Single bells were jangled and sets were rung in descending scales to warn of fire.[67] As a result of the Act for Preventing and Suppressing of Fires within the city of London (1667) the city was divided into quarters and each was ordered to appoint a bellman to walk the

---

[63] Clare Williams (ed.), *Thomas Platter's travels in England 1599* (London, 1937), p. 148 (17 September 1599). For arrangements in Portsmouth see M. Exwood and H.L. Lehmann (eds and trans), *The Journal of William Schellinks' Travels in England 1661-1663*, The Camden Society, 5th ser., 1 (London, 1993), p. 144.

[64] T.S. *A Jewell for the Gentrie* (London, 1614), sigs H2v-H3, 'Of hunting'.

[65] Ann Frances Shirley, *Shakespeare's Use of Off-Stage Sounds* (Lincoln, Neb., 1963), p. 22.

[66] See also Alain Corbin, *Village Bells. Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-Century French Countryside*, trans. Martin Thom (London, 1998), p. 97.

[67] Thomas Fuller, *The Holy State and The Profane State* (1642), ed. M. Graff Walten, 2 vols (New York, 1938), II, p. 409; Geoffrey Vaughan Blackstone, *A History of the British Fire Service* (London, 1957), pp. 31-2.

streets each night. A further Act of 1703 required that muck-men would heed fire alarms and travel to the fire 'upon the first Alarm' with dung with which to smother the flames.[68] Ralph Thoresby wrote of panic in Leeds following the news of an attack on Beeston in December 1688. In order to warn the citizens of a possible invasion 'the drums beat, the bells rang backward'.[69] Ringing in the silence of the night would have readily alerted the attention of the parish. Cambridge alderman Samuel Newton heard the bells of Great St Mary's 'jangle' early in the morning in March 1683 to give the town time to prepare for an unexpected visit by Charles II, who was reported to be fleeing from fire in Newmarket.[70]

Signals were needed to summon the militia. Hearing the sounds of drumming-up support, men could volunteer by following the drummer.[71] In June 1667, Samuel Pepys discussed 'the sad state' of the nation and the imminent Dutch War with his wife upon hearing 'the beating-up of drums this night for the train-bands, upon pain of death to appear in arms tomorrow morning'.[72] London's train-bands were also summoned by drum in peace time to suppress rebellions and risings.[73] In battle, signals were issued by trumpet and drum, and Robert Barret described the 'drumme' as 'the voice of the commander in the field'.[74]

---

[68] Blackstone, *History of the British Fire Service*, pp. 47, 63.
[69] Hunter (ed.), *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby*, I, p. 189.
[70] J. E. Foster (ed.), *The Diary of Samuel Newton, Alderman of Cambridge 1662-1717* (Cambridge, 1890), p. 84 (22 March 1683).
[71] *Ralph Josselin*, p. 13 ('1642'); Walter Rye (ed.), 'Extracts from Court Books of the City of Norwich 1666-1688', *Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society*, extra parts, 2 (Norwich, 1905), 97-205, p. 147.
[72] *Pepys*, VIII, p. 260 (11 June 1667). See also Edmund Harrold's reactions to military drumming in 1714, Harland (ed.), *Edmund Harrold: his book*, p. 205 (6 November 1714).
[73] William Schellinks heard a call to arms in London to suppress a feared rising in November 1662 and noted that all posts were manned and that the 'guards rode through the town to the sound of kettledrums and trumpets', Exwood and Lehmann (eds), *William Schellinks' Travels*, p. 166 (4 November 1662); See also *Pepys*, V, pp. 99-101 (26-7 March 1664); IX, p. 129 (24 March 1668), p. 466 (3 March 1669).
[74] Robert Barret, *The theorike and practike of moderne Warres* (London, 1598), pp. 6, 18, 21, 115. See also Gervase Markham, *The Souldiers Exercise* (London, 1639), pp. 16-17, 60-2.

Towns possessed drums, presumably to attract attention to the issue of civic orders, but also probably to assist in the gathering of men to defend the community in times of instability.[75] The number of drums held by the town of Lewes increased during the Civil War. In 1576 only one drum was listed in the inventory of goods passed between retiring and incoming constables, and Lewes still had only one municipal drum in 1642. In 1649 three drums were listed but none appeared on the inventory after 1661.[76] In these insecure times the Lewes authorities clearly perceived a need to increase their ability to summon and warn the community. The need for a town to keep a drum might have been reduced with the regular employment of a town crier. The criers made the vocal cry of 'Owye', usually in threes, which were intended to induce hushed attentiveness in public gatherings before proclamations and announcements were made.[77]

The majority of towns employed bellmen and their responsibilities varied according to seniority and local custom. The petty bellmen of Exeter walked the streets at night reminding the citizens of Exeter of the dangers of unattended fires. The duties of the more senior bellmen were to attend funerals, make proclamations and broadcast news.[78] In the mid sixteenth century York bellmen gave warnings of council ordinances.[79] In 1587 the bellmen were permitted to advertise prices of

---

[75] W. J. Connor (ed.), *The Southampton Mayor's Book of 1606-1608,* Southampton Record Society, 21 (Southampton, 1978), p. 110.

[76] L. F. Salzman (ed.), *The Town Book of Lewes, 1542-1701*, Sussex Record Series, 48 (Lewes, 1947), pp. 25, 67, 74, 86. Another drum was purchased in 1586 (p. 31) but this had dissappeared by 1642.

[77] Walter J. Harte, J.W. Schopp and H. Tapley-Soper (eds), *The Description of the Citie of Excester, by John Vowell alias Hoker, gentleman and chamberlayne of the same*, Publications of the Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 3 vols (Exeter, 1919-47), III, p. 846, 'The order for makinge of proclamations'. Justices wanting to search a property needed first to make three owyes for silence, proclaim in the King's name, read the writ, owye again three times and then proclaim again before they could legally enter, Michael Dalton, *The Countrey Justice. Conteyning the practise of the Justices of the peace out of their sessions* (London, 1618), p. 46.

[78] Harte, et al (eds), *The Description of the Citie of Excester*, III, p. 822.

[79] Angelo Raine (ed.), *York Civic Records VI*, The Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series, 112 (Wakefield, 1948), p. 115.

wood, coal and turf, for which service they were remunerated by the vendors.[80] The two Norwich bellmen signalled a variety of announcements by bell. In January 1675 John Wymar wrote to ask the bellman to warn the people of Norwich that they should not trust his wife.[81]

News and events; broadcasting and summoning

Parish bells could be used to broadcast news of national victories or the resolution of battles.[82] John Evelyn described the ringing in London which followed the taking of the Royal Prince during the 'Four Days Fight' with the Dutch in June 1666. The sounds of fighting had been clearly audible in London, and as the battle was a considerable victory for the Dutch, Evelyn reflected on hearing the bells; 'but God knows, it was rather a deliverance than a Triumph'. The purpose of the ringing might have been to put a positive spin on a bad outcome, thus bolstering enthusiasm and national loyalty.[83] The quashing of plots against the monarch were endorsed by ringings, and when Queen Elizabeth was saved from the Babbingdon Plot in 1586 the corporation of York agreed that 'all the bells shalbe ronge ymediatlie after sermon'.[84] Births, baptisms and birthdays of the members of the royal family were celebrated with nation-wide ringing.[85] With new monarchs came new ringing sequences and a reduced ringing calendar was

---

[80] Angelo Raine (ed.), *York Civic Records VIII*, The Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series, 119 (Wakefield, 1953), p. 135.
[81] Rye (ed.), 'Extracts from court books of City of Norwich', p. 135. On 13 April 1678 a clockmaker asked the Court to get the bellman to warn the citizens of his wife's laziness, p. 148.
[82] For examples of national and protestant victory ringings from the eighteenth century see Everard Leaver Guilford (ed.), *Records of the Borough of Nottingham. Extracts from the Archives of the Corporation of Nottingham, VI (1702-1760)* (Nottingham, 1914), pp. 27, 31, 77, 79, 213, 244, 264, 273, 277, 279. For ringing in celebration of the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 see David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells. National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (London, 1989), pp. 110-29.
[83] *Evelyn*, III, p. 440 (5 June 1666). See also *Pepys*, VII, p. 145 (4 June 1666); p. 152 (6 June 1666).
[84] Raine (ed.), *York Civic Records VIII*, p. 122.
[85] The 1738 volume of Stephen Monteage's diary is particularly rich in examples of such ringings, London, GL, MS 205/2; See also Sharpe, *Church Bells of Berkshire*, p. 294.

followed during the Commonwealth.[86] Coronations, and the anniversaries of coronations were celebrated with bellringing. When Pepys' was woken abruptly at five o'clock in the morning on 29 May 1666 by the bells ringing for the 'King's Birth and Restauracion day', it allowed him to make an early start at the office.[87] The ringing for Queen Elizabeth's Accession Day on 17th November continued long after her death. Ringing to celebrate and commemorate the foiling of the gunpowder plot on 5th November 1605 was a fixture throughout the period.[88] Through these ringings a collective social memory was maintained. Ringings on the 5th November carried a double message, to celebrate the saving of James I and the triumph of Protestantism over Catholicism; the malleability of the message ensured that ringings even continued throughout the reign of Catholic King James II.[89]

The primary function of church bells, however, was to call congregations to church.[90] In the preface of the 1552 *Book of Common Prayer*, the curate was instructed to 'cause a bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the people may come to hear God's Word and to pray'.[91] The first bell of St Nicholas', Durham would ring at noon on Sundays. At one o'clock two bells would chime 'and when all [of the congregation are] in they shall chyme three bells, or all'.[92] Bells also gave structure to the church service and by the injunctions of 1559 one bell was to be rung prior to a sermon, and in practise a

---

[86] Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, pp. 219-25; Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, pp. 46-8.
[87] *Pepys*, VII, p. 135 (29 May 1666).
[88] Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, chapter 8 'Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory', pp. 130-40 and chapter 9 'Remembering the fifth of November', pp. 141-55. See also chapter 10 'History and Providence in the English Revolution', pp. 156-70.
[89] Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, pp. 184-5.
[90] W.H. Frere (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the period of the Reformation III 1559-1575*, Alcuin Club Collections, 16 (London, 1910), pp. 15, 22.
[91] Gerald Bray (ed.), *Documents of the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 274.
[92] J. Barmby (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of Pittington and other parishes in the diocese of Durham, from A.D. 1580 to 1700*, The Surtees Society, 84 (Durham, 1888), p. 255. See also instruction for the clerk of Liverpool, J.A. Twemlow (ed.), *Liverpool Town Books*, 2 vols (Liverpool, 1918-35), II, p. 642 (26 October 1592).

sermon bell was rung either before the service to inform the congregation that a sermon would be preached, or during the service immediately before the sermon.[93] In some places a bell also rang once the sermon was over.[94] Aware that some dissenters would stay away from church until sermon time, which was signalled by this bell, in the 1680s Bishop Wren recommended that the 'same ringing of bells should be observed at all times whether there was a sermon or not.'[95]

Marking temporal divisions

The sounds of bells created audible demarcation around periods of time. Bells marked the hours which should be spent in pursuit of particular ends: in the worship of God; in sleep; in trade. Ringings for the dead and honorific ringings during life marked social divisions. Sounds could also indicate spatial divisions and the audible range of the church bells created a symbolic boundary to the parish. These divisions; temporal, social and spatial, are discussed below.

Although clock ownership increased dramatically during the period, becoming three times more prevalent in inventories by 1715 than they had been in 1685, in 1760 clocks were still expensive objects owned by a minority.[96] The most accurate method of time-telling available to early modern people was to listen for the chimes of church bells. By 1560 the majority of English parishes enjoyed the benefits of church clocks which chimed the hours and some even chimed quarter hours.[97] These clocks were usually without dials, so people would have listened

---

[93] Frere (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions 1559-1575*, p. 15; J.R. Nichols, *Bells Thro' the Ages. The Founders' Craft and the Ringers' Art* (London, 1928), pp. 123, 241-2.
[94] Foster (ed.), *The Diary of Samuel Newton*, p. 40 (30 January 1669).
[95] Nichols, *Bells Thro' the Ages*, pp. 241-2.
[96] Brian Loomes, *Country Clocks and their London Origins* (Newton Abbot, 1976), pp. 11-16; Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*, 2nd edn (London, 1996), pp. 25-6, 109.
[97] E.P. Thompson, 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism', *Past and Present*, 38 (1967), 56-97; p. 63; Cox asserts 'there was hardly a clockless church to be found in either town or country in the fifteenth century.' in *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 229.

to, and not watched, the passage of time. The responsibility of ensuring that the clock told the correct time often fell to the clerk of the parish.[98]

By the mid-seventeenth century alarm clocks could be purchased at considerable expense. In 1665 Pepys borrowed a 'larum watch' for use while his was mended, acknowledging his need 'to be up betimes by the help of a larum watch'.[99] Ralph Thoresby procured 'an alarm to the clock' after arising too early on two consecutive days in November 1680.[100] Many parishioners would have woken to the sound of church bells, or to the handbells rung by bellmen. The clerk of St Mary's, Nottingham, was paid twelve pence in 1572 by the borough to ring the 'Prime Belle' and similar arrangements were made across the country throughout the period.[101] Morning calls were not restricted to the larger towns. In 1676 a jury of Barton upon Humber in Lincolnshire appointed a man to 'call of Neighbours in the morning'.[102] Horns woke the apprentices and journeymen of the woollen and worsted trades in West Yorkshire.[103]

Curfew hours were signalled by bells in towns and cities. In an attempt to make life easier for the workers and inhabitants, the civic authorities of Exeter followed the example set by the London wards and established curfew ringing. In 1562 it was decreed that one bell of St. Mary's church should be rung at nine o'clock each evening and for quarter of an hour each morning at four between

---

98 Sharpe, *Church Bells of Berkshire*, p. 225.
99 *Pepys*, VI, p. 158 (14 July 1665).
100 Hunter (ed.), *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby*, I, pp. 71-3 (1 November 1680 - 6 December 1680). Thoresby still managed to rise too early twice during the following two years, p. 85 (3 June 1681), p. 136 (6 November 1682).
101 W.H. Stevenson (ed.), *Records of the Borough of Nottingham, being a series of extracts from the Archives of the Corporation of Nottingham, IV (1547-1625)* (Nottingham, 1882), p. 143. See also Salzman (ed.), *The Town Book of Lewes 1542-1701*, p. 113 (22 October 1690); Guy Parsloe (ed.), *The Minute Book of Bedford Corporation, 1647-1664*, Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 26 (Streatley, 1949), p. 133.
102 *Barton on Humber. The Town Book of 1676*, The Workers Education Authority (Barton on Humber, 1980), p. 10.
103 Herbert Heaton, *The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries from the earliest times up to the Industrial Revolution*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1965), pp. 346-7.

'Whyte sondaye' and September, and at five for the remainder of the year. When the designated bell broke two years later the dean and chapter of St Peter's supplied an alternative.[104] At the turn of the seventeenth century the clerk of St Mary's Reading found the task of ringing the eight o'clock evening bell an onerous one, the chiming caused 'a great pain and troble' to him, his wages were increased to compensate for his inconvenience.[105]

In public market places trade was regulated by bells. In the sixteenth century the market traders of Exeter were governed by rules which dictated permissible trading hours and a bell rang three times during the corn market. The first bell heralded the start of the market and before it chimed malt and meal sellers could not trade. After the ringing of the first bell only the traders from Exeter and its liberties were permitted to trade, others waited until the second bell, which 'knolled yn the mydle of the Market' and declared 'every man to have ffree lybertie to buy and sell'. After the third ringing no trading was permitted and no horses allowed to stand on the High Street.[106] Liverpool market traders faced substantial fines if they were found infringing market rules which made it an offence to 'bye anye kynd of corne' prior to the ringing of the common bell on market day.[107] An entry in the Southampton court leet records indicates that by the

---

[104] Harte et al (eds), *The Description of the Citie of Excester,* III, pp. 929-30. For ringing in the London Wards see 'Articles of the Wardmote Inquest (1617)' in Lawrence Manley, *London in the Age of Shakespeare: an anthology* (London, 1986), p. 188.

[105] Sharpe, *Church Bells of Berkshire*, p. 225. For other curfew regulations see Thomas North, *Church Bells of Northamptonshire: their inscriptions, traditions, and peculiar uses* (Leicester, 1878), p. 437. See also the Bristol council decree of the 1580s, Maureen Stanford (ed.), *The Ordinances of Bristol 1506-1598*, Publications of the Bristol Record Society, 41 (Bristol, 1990), p. 79.

[106] Harte et al (eds), *The Description of the Citie of Excester,* III, pp. 819, 915.

[107] Twemlow (ed.), *Liverpool Town Books,* I, p. 144. In October 1573 this rule was extended to prevent the sale of 'any grayne or corne' before the time that the 'comyn bell be and shalbe rong, tolled and knylld'. Twelve years later it was decreed that any person found selling corn before the 'marquett bell be ronge' would forfeit their goods, Twemlow (ed), *Liverpool Town Books,* II, pp. 135, 496. In October 1578 Thomas Bastwell was accordingly fined for buying barley before the market bell had rung, II, p. 303. Similar rules applied in York, Angelo Raine (ed.), *York Civic Records VII*, The Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 115 (Wakefield, 1950), p. 53 (October 1572).

early seventeenth century bellringing on market days was an accepted practice nation-wide. Ordering that the market bell be rung as before, the Southampton authorities desired 'redresse' for a lapse in ringing the market bell 'heretofore used and in all markett Townes accustomed'.[108]

The working hours of apprentices and labourers could also be defined by the sound of bells. A bell founded for a Coventry church in 1675 bears the inscription 'I ring at 6 to let men know, When too and from thair worke to go.'[109] Bishop Pilkington spoke of the eagerness of the labourer to leave work to eat 'when the clock smiteth he will cast down his burden in the midway ... and when his hour cometh at night, at the first stroke of the clock he casteth down his tools, leaveth his work'.[110] The working day of the Cheapside apprentices, within earshot of the Bow bells, would traditionally end at nine o'clock at night when the clerk rang the bells.[111]

Marking social divisions

Bells also marked another temporal division - the end of a persons' life. Other than murderers, suicides, infringers of church regulations and some plague victims, the death of each baptised person received some form of campanological respect.[112] Subject to regional and temporal variations, this ringing took three forms: the passing bell, the death knell and the funeral bell. The number and size

---

[108] F.J.C. and D.W. Hearnshaw (eds), *Southampton Court Leet Records*, Publications of the Southampton Record Society, 4 vols (Southampton, 1905-1908) III, no. 97 (1604). For a description of the reactions to the market bell in Leeds see Daniel Defoe, *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724-1726), ed. Pat Rogers (London, 1971), pp. 500-2.
[109] Nichols, *Bells Thro' the Ages,* p. 123.
[110] James Scholefield (ed.), *The Works of John Pilkington, B.D., Lord Bishop of Durham,* The Parker Society, 3 (Cambridge, 1842), p. 466.
[111] A rhyme characterised this relationship; 'Clarke of the Bow Bells with the yellow locks / For thy late ringing thy head shall have knocks / Children of Chepe hold you all still, / For you shall have Bow Bells rung at your will, in John Stow, *A Survey of London* (1598), ed. Henry Morley as *A Survey of London written in the year 1598* (London, 1912), p. 253.
[112] Price, *Bells and Man*, p. 114.

of bells that a particular parish possessed would have limited the variety of tolls and knells available, but the status of the dead also determined which bells could be used.

The passing bell would summon the priest, who was 'specially called for to comfort the sick person'.[113] The 67th Canon (1603) required that 'when any is passing out of this life, a bell shall be tolled, and the minister shall not then slack to do his last duty.'[114] However, the minister was not the only person expected to react to this toll. The sound of the clapper striking slowly on one side of the treble bell for up to one hour would have advertised the imminent death of one from the community, reminded listeners of their own mortality, and induced hearers to pray for the sick.[115] John Donne considered his own feelings upon hearing a passing bell 'tolling softly for another' which reminded him that he too would be on the verge of death one day. He wondered if the subject of the passing bell was aware it rang for him; 'Perchance hee for whom this *Bell* tolls, may bee so ill, as that he knowes not it *tolls* for him'. Donne was suffering from relapsing fever at the time and wondered whether the bell might have tolled for him, warning; 'never send to know for whom the *bell* tolls; it tolls for *thee*.'[116] The practice of ringing the passing bell declined during the period, although the timing and extent of this decline varied between parishes.[117] Tom Ingram suggests that this increasing obscelesence may have resulted from the inconvenience caused to sextons who rang

---

[113] Gerald Bray (ed.), *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, Church of England record series, 6 (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 167; see also Frere (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions 1559-1575*, p. 62.
[114] Bray (ed.), *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, p. 359.
[115] Rev. Robert Kirk, 'Sermons, conferences, men's opinions of the late Transactions with a description of London' (1689), transcribed by Donald Maclean as 'London in 1689-90 by the Rev. R. Kirk. Part IV', *London and Middlesex Archaeological Society Transactions*, new ser., 7 (London, 1934) 133-149, p. 133; Frere (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions 1559-1575*, p. 285; K. Fincham (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church* (Woodbridge, 1994), p. 207.
[116] Rhodes (ed.), *John Donne. Selected Prose*, pp. 125-6.
[117] Tyack, *Book about Bells*, pp. 192-4.

of bells that a particular parish possessed would have limited the variety of tolls and knells available, but the status of the dead also determined which bells could be used.

The passing bell would summon the priest, who was 'specially called for to comfort the sick person'.[113] The 67th Canon (1603) required that 'when any is passing out of this life, a bell shall be tolled, and the minister shall not then slack to do his last duty.'[114] However, the minister was not the only person expected to react to this toll. The sound of the clapper striking slowly on one side of the treble bell for up to one hour would have advertised the imminent death of one from the community, reminded listeners of their own mortality, and induced hearers to pray for the sick.[115] John Donne considered his own feelings upon hearing a passing bell 'tolling softly for another' which reminded him that he too would be on the verge of death one day. He wondered if the subject of the passing bell was aware it rang for him; 'Perchance hee for whom this *Bell* tolls, may bee so ill, as that he knowes not it *tolls* for him'. Donne was suffering from relapsing fever at the time and wondered whether the bell might have tolled for him, warning; 'never send to know for whom the *bell* tolls; it tolls for *thee*.'[116] The practice of ringing the passing bell declined during the period, although the timing and extent of this decline varied between parishes.[117] Tom Ingram suggests that this increasing obscelesence may have resulted from the inconvenience caused to sextons who rang

---

[113] Gerald Bray (ed.), *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, Church of England record series, 6 (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 167; see also Frere (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions 1559-1575*, p. 62.
[114] Bray (ed.), *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, p. 359.
[115] Rev. Robert Kirk, 'Sermons, conferences, men's opinions of the late Transactions with a description of London' (1689), transcribed by Donald Maclean as 'London in 1689-90 by the Rev. R. Kirk. Part IV', *London and Middlesex Archaeological Society Transactions*, new ser., 7 (London, 1934) 133-149, p. 133; Frere (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions 1559-1575*, p. 285; K. Fincham (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church* (Woodbridge, 1994), p. 207.
[116] Rhodes (ed.), *John Donne. Selected Prose*, pp. 125-6.
[117] Tyack, *Book about Bells*, pp. 192-4.

the bells in all weathers day and night. 'Scarlet', the sexton of a Peterborough church received eight shillings in 1572 'beyng a poore olde man and rysing oft in the nyghts to tolle the bell for sick persons, the weather beynge grevous, and in consideration of his good service towards a gowne to kepe hym warme.'[118]

Once death came a knell rang out. Donne explained that whereas the tolling of the passing bell carried a '*faint*, and *intermitting pulse*', the ringing of the death knell was stronger, and the clapper struck both sides of the bell. In Donne's description this ringing was less solemn and more positive than the passing toll; the hearer would know that the dead person was finally enjoying 'everlasting *rest*.'[119] Established procedures for publicising death allowed only one short peal, but fell short of stipulating a time limit for this peal, so individual parishes occasionally set their own knelling limits. In 1636 the sexton of St. Thomas', Salisbury was instructed to knell for no more than one hour.[120] As death could occur at all hours, theoretically the knell might be rung at any time, yet knelling for those who died after sunset could be postponed until the following morning. When alderman John Hering died at night 'of a vyolent Fitt of the Stone' his colleague Samuel Newton noted that the bell did not ring until six in the morning.[121] The bells would not knell until after prayers had ended for a person who died during the hours of divine service.[122]

It was possible to highlight the rank and status of the deceased by varying the length of the knell or by choosing exclusive bells. The largest bells created the most sombre sounds. In 1603 the charge for a 'Dobble knell' upon the great bell

---

[118] North, *The Church Bells of Northamptonshire*, p. 378.
[119] Rhodes (ed.), *John Donne. Selected prose*, pp. 127-8.
[120] Article 12 (1566) and Canon 67 (1603) in Bray (ed.), *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, pp. 167, 359, 729; Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 173.
[121] Foster (ed.), *The Diary of Samuel Newton*, p. 73 (21 September 1674); see also the ringing for Troylus Atkinson, a Cambridge bookseller, p. 74 (6 June 1675); 'Bishop Miles Smith's Articles for Gloucester Diocese' (1622) in Fincham (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church*, p. 207.
[122] Foster (ed.), *The Diary of Samuel Newton*, p. 74 (6 June 1675), see also p. 56 (4 March 1669).

of St. Nicholas, Strood, stood at two shillings and six pence. The great bell knelled 'for goodwife gibson's childe' at a cost of twelve pence. The 'thurde bell' knelled for 'John stanley a saylor' and the second bell knelled for John Clipton's servant and 'smithe a saylor'.[123] Fees established for knells at St Dunstan's, Cranbrook in Kent in 1619 ranged from eight pence for the small bell to three shillings and four pence for the great bell, which was reserved for ringing only when the 'p[ar]tie deceased had landes or were esteemed to be worth one hundred poundes or were the sonne or daughter of one of the same estate.'[124] In the late-seventeenth century, parishioners unable to pay the sexton of St Mary's, Warwick six pence to ring the fifth bell had the 'liberty to send any person to ring the bell without paying for the same. And if the party dec[ease]d hath none to ring the bell for him, nor money to pay for the same, the clarke shall ring the said bell without receiving any pay for the ringing of the said bell.'[125] In 1608 fees were assessed for the ringing of a death knell at St Edmund's, Salisbury for a stranger who was not destined to be buried in the parish.[126] Bells would mark the wealth and status of deceased community members and also distinguish them from passing strangers.

A bell, or bells, would ring at funerals. In many parishes the tenor bell tolled for between a quarter and half an hour prior to the burial and clappers were sometimes muffled with 'pieces of leather, old hat, or any other thing that is pretty thick' to create a more sombre sound.[127] Fearing that excessive post-mortem ringings would recall the generous campanological respect shown in pre-

---

[123] Henry R. Plomer (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Nicholas, Strood, 1603-1662*, Kent Archaeological Society Record Series, 5 (Canterbury, 1927), p. 83. In 1612 the great bell knelled for George Pitcher senior, the third bell for 'the hempe dressers sonn', p. 104.
[124] J. C. L. Stahlschmidt, *The Church Bells of Kent. Their inscriptions, founders, uses and traditions* (London, 1887), p. 240.
[125] Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 212; In Leeds knells on the little bell were free, but the great bell cost twelve pence, in 'Bell-ringing at Leeds in 1632. A note in the handwriting of Ralph Thoresby', *Miscellanea VI,* The Thoresby Society, 22 (Leeds, 1915), p. 234.
[126] Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 57.
[127] *Campanalogia, or the Art of Ringing* (1753), cited in Tyack, *A Book about Bells*, p. 201.

Reformation times, the ecclesiastical authorities were concerned that ringing at and before burial should not be too protracted.[128] In 1566 a limit of one short peal was set to ring before the burial and another afterwards.[129] The burial order for funerals held at St Nicholas', Durham was established in 1687. A bell, or bells, were to ring for one hour to give notice, and then ring again one hour later. Ringing for a third time would occur 'before the expiracion of the second houre appointed for attending such funerals'. On this third ring the sexton was expected to go to the house of the deceased and help convey the body to church.[130] Funeral ringing fulfilled more than one function, gathering a congregation to say farewell to the dead and prompting the living to ponder their own mortality.

Funeral bells could also be used to highlight social differences. The gender of the deceased could be rung out at the funeral prior to burial. Three sets of three strokes, or tellers, would be rung for a man, (creating the expression 'nine tellers mark the man', from which the saying 'nine tailors make the man' was corrupted) two sets of three for a woman and one set of three for a child. Occasionally the age of the deceased was also rung out in chimes.[131] For those who could afford it, more than one bell would ring at burial. In 1608 fees for funeral ringing at St Edmund's, Salisbury were set at ten shillings for all bells, seven shillings and ten pence for five bells, twelve pence for two bells and when only the fifth bell was 'Ronge w[i]th one man, then the Church is to have iiij^{d}'.[132] Elaborate ringings were performed for the funerals of bellringers and for those of high rank. By the orders drawn up in 1603, the ringers of Cheapside were instructed to ring a knell peal at the parish church where a fellow ringer was to be buried, or at the 'next

---

[128] Frere (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions 1559-1575*, pp. 91, 98, 170, 256, 285; Fincham (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church*, p. 59.
[129] Bray (ed.), *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, p. 167.
[130] Barmby (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of Durham*, p. 260.
[131] Julian Litten, *The English Way of Death. The Common Funeral Since 1450* (London, 1991), p. 242; Stahlschmidt, *The Church Bells of Kent,* p. 127.
[132] Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 57. See also p. 173 for details of 1653 ringing costs.

parish Church where conveniently the Company may be assembled and meet together'.[133] Effusive bell-ringing might be heard at the funeral of important people. When Henry Howard, Lord Privy Seal and the first Earl of Northampton, died in 1612, a bell tolled for over a day before his funeral.[134] Cambridge alderman Samuel Newton described the passage of the body of Matthew Wren, Bishop of Ely, in May 1667, between Trumpington and Great St Mary's in Cambridge. The bell of every parish except St Edward's tolled when the hearse passed through.[135] For royal and aristocratic funerals the sound of the bell could be supplemented with sounds of gunshot, trumpets or unbraced drums.[136]

Bells were rung to honour some individuals during their lifetime. Such honorific ringings were limited to high-ranking clergy, foreign and local dignitaries and members of royalty and the nobility. Bells were instruments of pomp and ceremony, greeting the individual upon their entrance to or passage through a parish. Outriders would go on ahead of the entourage to give the parishes advance warning of the visit, thus allowing them to make preparations for ringing and other greetings.[137] The churchwardens of St Nicholas paid the ringers of Strood for ringing 'when the Archbushopes grace of Canterbury come by' in 1620.[138] In their accounts for 1560-1, the churchwardens of St Edmunds, Salisbury recorded a

---

133 London, BL, Sloane MS 3468 'Ringers of Cheapside orders' (1603), fol. 27v.
134 Jennifer Woodward, *The Theatre of Death: the ritual management of royal funerals in Renaissance England 1570-1625* (Woodbridge, 1997), p. 144.
135 Foster (ed.), *The Diary of Samuel Newton*, p. 18 (19 May 1667). Presumably St Edward's church were unable to ring, the churchwardens' accounts for this period have not survived. See also Henry Machyn's description of two funerals: of 'old master Swyft', the auditor of St Paul's, London, who was buried with 'grett ryngyng'; and of 'master Hulsun skrevener of London', who was buried with 'grett ryngyng as ever was h[e]ard', John Gough Nichols (ed.), *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, The Camden Society, old ser., 42 (London, 1848), p. 266 (3 September 1561); p. 291 (1 September 1562).
136 Henry W. Robinson and Walter Adams (eds), *The Diary of Robert Hooke 1672-1680* (London, 1935), p. 423 (2 September 1679); Woodward, *The Theatre of Death*, p. 18; Morris (ed.), *Journeys of Celia Fiennes*, p. 295.
137 Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, pp. 72-3.
138 Plomer (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Nicholas, Strood*, p. 128. See also p. 164 - the ringers were paid five shillings in 1631 'at the Bishops going by'.

payment of fourteen pence for ringing 'when my lorde byshop cam in'.[139] In September 1607 the ringers of St Oswald's, Durham received two shillings for ringing when Lord [Bishop of] Durham came from London, and twelve pence in March the following year when he ended his visitation. The Lambeth churchwardens recorded expenses amounting to six shillings in their accounts for 1638-1639 for ringing 'when the Lo[rd] of Cant[erbury] came from Craydon'.[140] Foreign dignitaries were similarly saluted. As Grand Duke Cosmo of Tuscany passed through Blandford in Dorset in 1669 he was saluted by bells and his official recorder noted that this 'respect was shewed at all places we met with on the road'.[141] Indeed, in 1669 the churchwardens of St Thomas, Salisbury entered into their accounts two shillings six pence for 'Ringing for the Tuskie Prince [Cosmo] by order of the vestery'.[142] Local heroes were welcomed home by ringing bells. In December 1601 the villagers of Itteringham, Norfolk, rang the bells by candlelight 'for joy that Ashley Wood Gent was returned home from London.' Unfortunately, the ringers' candles set the belfry on fire.[143]

The practice of ringing when the monarch passed through the parish created an audible reminder of his or her presence and majesty. Although not a novel feature of Elizabeth's reign, ringing the Queen's movements was given special prominence and such honorific ringings continued throughout the early modern period for all monarchs.[144] The parish of St Oswald prepared for the anticipated

---

139 Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 226.
140 Charles Drew (ed.), *Lambeth Churchwardens' Accounts, 1504-1645, and Vestry book, 1610*, Surrey Record Society, 2 vols (18 and 20) (London, 1941-2), II, p. 144.
141 Lorenzo Magalotti, *Travels of Cosmo the third, Grand Duke of Tuscany through England, during the reign of King Charles the Second*, ed. Joseph Mawman (London, 1821), p. 148. In Strood bread and beer costing three shillings were provided for the ringers in 1637 when 'Count Palatine came by', Plomer (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Nicholas, Strood*, p. 178.
142 Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 223; see also the ringing for the Prince of Orange in the accounts for 1688-9, p. 224.
143 Cited by Paul Cattermole, *Church bells and Bell-Ringing: a Norfolk profile* (Woodbridge, 1990), p. 18. This ringing was only described because of the accident, similar ringings would never have been recorded.
144 Drew (ed.), *Lambeth Churchwardens' Accounts*, various examples, II, pp. 89-228. The cost of

passage of James VI of Scotland through Durham on his way to claim the English throne in 1603 by purchasing new ringing equipment.[145] The ringers of both St Mary's and St Peter's rang a welcome to the Duke of Cumberland as he passed through Nottingham in August 1759.[146] In contrast to the ringing which celebrated birthdays, anniversaries and coronations across the country, these honorific ringings would have been heard by the dignitary for whom they were rung. Requirements to ring for honorific purposes differed with each parish, depending on proximity to royal or ducal residences, or their location on major transport routes. London parishes would have been under a greater pressure to ring on such occasions as royal births and anniversaries because an absence of ringing would have been conspicuous.[147] After investigating churchwardens' accounts of the eighteenth century, John Cox noted that the 'accession of the Hanoverians proved a godsend to the ringers of the east coast, for the Georges were constantly crossing and recrossing to Hanover by way of Harwich.'[148]

Bells were not the only instruments used to augment prestige; guns and trumpets could also be used to signal respect. Pepys was bemused when men who left to fight the Dutch in 1666 'let off the guns' on their departure. To Pepys such salutes, if issued correctly, were elements of an important code governed by complex rules; in particular shot was reserved only for the elite of English society and for visiting dignitaries. In 1675 Pepys, in his post of Secretary of the British Admiralty, drew up regulations which limited the numbers of salutes to be made, on a scale governed by rank. These ranged from three guns for an admiral, to twenty-one for royalty. Pepys would have considered the issue of such signals for

---

this practice was lowest in the 1567-8 accounts, at 8d, and highest in 1602-3, at 33s 4d. Plomer (ed.), *Churchwardens' accounts of St. Nicholas, Strood*, p. 87, in 1605 the ringers were paid two shillings and six pence when James I came to Strood.

[145] Barmby (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of Durham*, p. 136.

[146] Guilford (ed.), *Records of the Borough of Nottingham, VI*, p. 277 (9 August 1759).

[147] Drew (ed.), *Lambeth Churchwardens' Accounts*, I, p. 158.

[148] Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 225.

people he did not deem to be worthy as inappropriate and he described the actions of the men as 'strange sport'.[149]

Important people at special events were heralded by the sound of a trumpet fanfare. That trumpets were expensive instruments which were difficult to play restricted their use to special occasions and for special people. Trumpeting was the sound of pomp par excellence and they sounded at the proclamations, coronations and weddings of monarchs.[150] (see fig. 8) Henry Machyn described the procession by barge of Queen Elizabeth from Westminster to court in May 1560 to the sound of 'trumpettes blohyng'.[151] Fame was denoted by the trumpet and John Earle described the trumpeter as 'the common attendant of glittring folkes'.[152] By varying the sounding, a trumpet could mark social divisions; a 'flourish' sounded for royalty but only a 'tucket' for a gentleman.[153]

Perhaps as a consequence of their military connection, trumpets were also associated with martial achievement and bravery, and one proverb observed that 'Brave Actions never want a Trumpet.'[154] 'Blowing one's own trumpet' might be considered immodest; to be a genuine accolade the trumpet would need to be

---

[149] *Pepys*, VII, p. 141 (2 June 1666). For examples of correct signalling see *Pepys*, pp. 153-4 (22 May 1660); II, p. 121 (13 June 1661); III, p. 50 (22 March 1662). For exchanges of salutes which appeared to be excessive to the commentator, see Exwood and Lehmann (eds), *William Schellinks' Travels*, pp. 41, 139, and Lorenzo Magalotti, *Travels of Cosmo the third, Grand Duke of Tuscany through England, during the reign of King Charles the Second*, ed. Joseph Mawman (London, 1821), pp. 116-17, 120-1. For gun salutes see Peter Kemp, *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea* (Oxford, 1976), p. 747.

[150] F.W. Galpin, *Old English instruments of music. Their history and character* (London, 1910), pp. 199-200. See *Evelyn*, IV, pp. 412-14 (6 -10 February 1685); Exwood and Lehmann (eds), *William Schellinks' Travels,* p. 59 (20 August 1661), p. 85 (21 May 1662); Foster (ed.), *The Diary of Samuel Newton,* p. 65 (4 October 1671).

[151] Nichols (ed.), *The Diary of Henry Machyn*, p. 234 (May 1560).

[152] For this connection between trumpets and fame see Fuller, *The Holy State and The Profane State,* ed. Graff Walten, II, p. 218; John Earle, *The Autograph Edition of Microcosmographie (c.1627),* facs edn (Leeds, 1966), p. 110.

[153] Shirley, *Shakespeare's Use of Off-Stage Sounds*, p. 17.

[154] Fuller, *Gnomologia*, p. 37, no. 1016. This proverb, like many others can be read in two ways. It could mean that all brave actions are applauded by trumpet, or that genuinely brave actions do not need trumpets. Either way an association between bravery and trumpeting is evident.

REJOICINGS AT THE CORONATION OF JAMES I, 25 JULY 1603
From a German print (right-hand panel)

fig. 8, German print of rejoicings at the coronation of James I, 25 July 1603.

sounded in one's honour.[155] As a symbol of the resurrection, the trumpet was connected with the last day when one would herald the return of Christ in majesty to judge 'the quick and the dead'.[156]

Marking spatial divisions

Trumpets were not used only to emphasise the importance of people but also to denote important events. Fanfares were issued at the opening of parliament and other important state or civic occasions such as the Lord Mayor's ceremony and the opening of assize sessions.[157] Trumpets blaring at important events would have indicated the status of a particular place or venue; they could have been viewed as territorial markers.

Modern soundscape theorist, Raymond Murray Schafer, has argued convincingly that parish bells can define community boundaries; 'for the parish is an acoustic space, circumscribed by the range of the church bell.' Schafer considers the sound of the church bell as centripetal; it attracts together and unifies the community, from its boundaries to the centre.[158] Such aural boundaries are purely symbolic, as sounds travel differently in different weathers, and so could not be used to establish a static territory. There is evidence that early modern people would have understood the notion of audible boundaries. In the early seventeenth century the traveller Fynes Moryson remarked that 'Londiners, and all

---

[155] James Kelly, *A Compleat Collection of Scottish Proverbs, Explained and made Intelligible to the English Reader* (London, 1721), p. 375. However, Abraham Fleming believed that good deeds should be self- trumpeted, *A Panoplie of Epistles; Or, a looking glasse for the unlearned* (London, 1576), p. 59.

[156] *The Bible, Authorized King James Version* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 306-9 [Rev. 8:2 - 11:19].

[157] Exwood and Lehmann (eds), *William Schellinks' Travels*, p. 74 (8 March 1661); p. 66 (8 November 1661); pp. 167-8 (7 November 1662); *Evelyn*, V, p. 578 (7 September 1704). For examples of the Lord Mayor's ceremony see Gottfried von Bülow (trans.), 'Journey made by Lupold von Wedel', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* new ser., 9 (1895), p. 253; Nichols (ed.), *The Diary of Henry Machyn*, p. 270 (29 October 1561); p. 294 (29 October 1562).

[158] Schafer, *Tuning of the World,* p. 54. For a French perspective see Corbin, *Village Bells*, pp. 73, 93-5.

within the sound of Bow-Bell, are in reproch called Cocknies, and eaters of buttered tostes.'[159] The Bow bells were significant because since the mid-fifteenth century they sounded the curfew, and thus they defined the city limits.[160]

Parish bells were often a focus of collective local pride. Parishes with relatively scarce ringing resources were subjected to ridicule by their neighbours. The bells of St. Peter and St. Paul in Charing, Kent melted in a fire in 1590. From 1608 the parish had use of only one bell, giving rise to a local rhyme:

> Dirty Charing lies in a hole,
> It has but one bell and that was stole.[161]

Phillip Julius, Duke of Stettin-Pomerania, remarked about the amount of money that English parishes put towards 'harmoniously-sounding bells, that one [parish] being preferred which has the best bells.'[162] Parish ringers occasionally engaged in campanological battles by trying to outring the neighbouring parish. Horatio Busino claimed that such behaviour was typical in 'almost every belfry' of England, where ringers 'bet who can make the parish bells be heard at the greatest distance.'[163] Bruce R. Smith considers such wagers to indicate 'deliberate attempts

---

[159] Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary*, in 3 parts (London, 1617), part III, p. 53. 'We are through out all the Realm called cockneys that are borne in London, or in the sounde of Bow bell', John Bridges, *A Sermon preached at Paul's Cross* (London, 1571), p. 104; 'Simon Wagstaff' [Jonathan Swift] *A Complete Collection of Genteel and Ingenious Conversation, According to the most Polite Mode and Method Now Used at Court, and in the Best Companies of England*, repr. of 1755 edn (Bristol, 1995), p. 244.

[160] London, GL, MS 4992/1, 'Records of Cordwainers' and Bread Street Wards in the City of London', Manuscript by William Chaffers (n.d.), fol. 154; Stow, *Survey of London*, p. 252.

[161] Stahlschmidt, *The Church Bells of Kent,* pp. 214-15 . There is no evidence to corroborate this accusation of theft, but it does indicate that having limited campanological resources would expose a parish to derisive comments.

[162] Frederic Gerschow, 'Diary of the Journey of Philip Juilius, Duke of Stettin-Pomerania, through England in the Year 1602', ed. Gottfried von Bülow, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, new ser., 6 (1892), 1-67, p. 7.

[163] Peter Razzell (ed.), *The journals of two Travellers in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England. Thomas Platter and Horatio Busino* (London, 1995), p. 168 (10 July 1618).

to breach the parish's acoustic horizon' and transcend the boundaries marked out during rogation ceremonies.[164]

Bells could be used to stake a symbolic claim over territory. Cosmo's official recorder, Lorenzo Magalotti, noticed that a small cupola rose from a gallery on the roof of Audley End House. This cupola, he noted, contained a clock 'the sound of which proclaims to a great distance, the magnificence of this vast fabric.'[165] The third bell of St Andrew's church in Bridstock, Northamptonshire, was founded by the gift of John Barton in 1647. Barton had been a plaintiff against local landowner, Sir John Zouch, in a case to recover common rights on land in nearby Benefield and was reputed to have told Zouch that he would leave a cow which would low three times each day when its tail was pulled, and its sound would be heard over the common. The 'cow' was the third bell, which he paid to have rung at four and eleven o'clock in the morning and eleven o'clock at night.[166] Through this ringing, Barton secured a symbolic territorial claim to the land.

Sounds signals were made for a variety of reasons. They would warn, inform, gather and divide communities. Some signals were regular and routine features of early modern English life, such as the hourly chimes, the nightly curfew ringing, and church service ringings. Some were issued occasionally or sporadically, as and when they were needed, to warn of fire or to broadcast news or deaths. Signals were used to orchestrate ceremonies and to celebrate important people and occasions. Signalling instruments such as hand bells, church bells,

---

[164] Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England. Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago, 1999), pp. 52-3.
[165] Magalotti, *Travels of Cosmo*, p. 204.
[166] Peter Whalley (ed.), *The History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire. Compiled from the manuscript collections of the late learned antiquary John Bridges, Esq.*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1791), II, pp. 285-7, 397; North, *The Church Bells of Northamptonshire*, p. 206.

town bells, market bells, trumpets, drums and clappers, combined with short vocal cries, created a form of aural language, or code. The sophistication of a parish code would have depended on the quantity and quality of bells and the skill of the ringers. Rich parishes in big cities generally had more bells than poor rural parishes. Different parishes followed different customs as the use of the bells would have been tailored to individual parish needs.[167] In towns bells were often used for a variety of purposes; to call children to school or to synchronise corporation business. In villages bells could be used to assist the agricultural process; gatherers were called by the harvest and gleaning bells.

These sounds attracted attention above other sounds, and instruments were chosen according to the degree of sound penetration required. Signalling apparatus would have been ineffective if the sounds produced were not audible by those expected to act upon the message. By implicit contrast one proverb noted the particular appeal of metal bells to gather people together, 'To the counsell of fools a wooden bell.'[168] The utility and ubiquity of bells and other signalling instruments meant that they were powerful tools which needed to be controlled in order to avoid abuse. Any abuses would have resulted in a dilution of the authority in whose interests the signals were generated. The need to control the issuance of sound signals is the focus of the next chapter.

---

[167] For the Cambridge corporation's use of the school bell see Foster (ed.), *The Diary of Samuel Newton*, p. 35 (23 October 1668); for agricultural uses see Enid Porter, *Cambridgeshire Customs and Folklore* (London, 1969), p. 124; Stahlschmidt, *The Church Bells of Kent*, p. 126.

[168] George Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum - Or Outlandish proverbs, sentences, &c* (London, 1651), p. 33.

CHAPTER 5 - BELLS ARE AS GREAT TURNCOATS AS THOSE THAT COMMAND 'EM: THE CONTROL OF SOUND SIGNALS:

Sounds which could organise time, summon people to gather, call men to war, or warn of disaster, needed to be carefully controlled to retain their effectiveness. For signals to be useful they needed to be deployed properly and comprehended easily. This chapter considers who controlled the means of sound-production in early modern England, who had the power to force the issue of signals and who could prevent them. Sound signals made in public were issued and controlled by a variety of authorities. I will initially discuss portable instruments commonly used in the civic realm, handbells, drums and trumpets and then the bells which hung in parish churches, thereby showing how various authorities attempted to limit their use and thus maintain respect for their messages.

The control of civic signalling

Sound signals were only effective when they could be identified amidst a background of extraneous sounds. In order to avoid saturating the streets with signals, which would mask genuine warnings and commands, civic authorities attempted to ensure that the issuance of such sounds was carefully controlled. The authority to issue civic commands and proclamations needed to be restricted in order to maintain their efficacy. Civic signals might be regarded as a form of 'authorized language' and the power contained in them derived from a belief that those making the sounds were legitimate and authoritative bearers of news.[1] Civic signalling apparatus was owned exclusively by the authorities, could only be used by salaried and liveried officials, and could be locked away in the civic chest to

---

[1] This idea is developed from Pierre Bourdieu's consideration of 'authorized language' and 'symbolic power', in, *Language and Symbolic Power* ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, 1992), see esp. pp. 111, 167-70.

avoid misuse by others. The importance of civic signals is evident both through the wide-ranging uses detailed in the last chapter and by the protection afforded to those who issued them. In 1709 the Westminster Burgess court warned that 'if any person or persons whatsoever after sight or knowledge of this Order do or shall disturb hinder or molest the said Stephen Busby [the bellman] in carrying or ringing the said Bell ... Be it at their Perill'.[2]

Even instruments not owned by the authorities were subject to control.[3] In November 1569 precautions were issued to secure the safety of the citizens of York during the Northern Rising. The Lord Lieutenant ordered that on hearing an alarm 'no maner of men, women ne children shall make any showtyng, rynging or noyse but to kepe sylent'.[4] Bylaws limited the purposes for which certain sounds were permitted. By an order of the Common Council of 1554 people were forbidden to 'sounde eny drume for the gatheringe of eny people' within the City of London and its Liberties. In 1576 the Council issued a precept against 'showtinges, hooping noyses, Soundinge of drumes or instruments, shootinge of gunnes or using squybbes'.[5] Around the turn of the eighteenth century the London Aldermen ordered the constables to seize all people beating drums in the streets, asserting a need to reiterate the 'Ancient & knowne Laws of this Citty' against this practice due to the behaviour of 'divers persons' who had 'of late with Drums beat before them tumultuously rode and walked in and through the streets Lanes and other Publick place & passages of the Citty and Liberties thereof' in order to assemble

---

2 William Henry Manchée, *The Westminster City Fathers, the Burgess Court of Westminster, 1585-1901* (London, 1924), p. 42 (13 December 1709).

3 Sean Shesgreen (ed.), *The Criers and Hawkers of London, Engravings and Drawings by Marcellus Laroon* (Aldershot, 1990), pp. 78, 144; William Henry Pyne, *The Costumes of Great Britain* (London, 1808), s.v. 'Serjeant Trumpeter', plate 18. Until the Police Act (1839) forbade the use of noisy instruments in advertising, vendors did so at the pleasure of the Serjeant Trumpeter of England, who granted licences to fiddlers, drummers and fifers. Without his consent they could not sound, beat or play at any public entertainment.

4 Angelo Raine (ed.), *York Civic Records VI*, The Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 112 (Wakefield, 1948), p. 172.

5 London, CLRO, Jour. 16, fol. 287v; Jour. 20, fol. 390.

spectators for prize-fights and bull and bear baitings.[6] Limits were also set in provincial towns. In 1686 Dutchman John Angligrove was given permission by the Court of Norwich to show animals in public, but it was stipulated that he was 'not to beat a drum or sound a trumpet.'[7]

Such regulations were frequently flouted. In 1654 a victualler was bound over by the Portsmouth justices for 'riding through the town and Garrison at noonday with a Trumpet sounding before him and other misdemeanours.'[8] Joseph Hambling 'a Vagrant and a prize fighter' was put to labour in 1721 for 'going about the streets with a drawn sword in his hand & a drum beating thereby causing a great Mob and tumult.'[9] In the same year two 'comon shewers of poppet shows' were taken by the constable of the Tower division for beating a drum and playing a violin 'in order to Entice and draw people together in a disorderly and Tumultuous manner.'[10] Sounds which caused people to gather were regarded with particular disapproval if issued when congregations should have been filing into churches. In 1613 Gervase Whitehead was presented to the archdeacon's court of Nottingham for 'comminge to Clifton and alluring the people to prophane gods service by playing upon a paire of bagpipes.'[11] When illicit rabble-rousing sounds were issued at night the potential for disruption was intensified. Rule 22 of the *Lawes of the Market* (1595) stipulated that '[n]o man shall blow any horne in the night

---

[6] London, CLRO, Rep. 105, fols 335-6, 'Order to Constables to seize all persons found beating in the streets - Ditto printed and Posted.' For an incident involving 'a pretended licence' for sounding trumpets at puppet shows in June 1746 see London, LMA, *Calendar to the Books and Orders of the court* (typed 1922), bk 1034, p. 48. See also Tom Brown, *Amusements Serious and Comical. Calculated for the Meridian of London* (London, 1700), p. 22, for a description of a 'Damn'd Trumpeter calling in the Rabble to see a Calf with Six Legs and a Top-Knot'.

[7] Walter Rye (ed.), 'Extracts from the Court Books of the City of Norwich 1666-1688', *Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society*, extra parts, 2 (Norwich, 1905), 97-205, p. 180.

[8] Arthur J. Willis and Margaret J. Hoad (eds) *Portsmouth Borough Sessions Papers, 1653-1688,* Portsmouth Record Society, 1 (London and Chichester, 1971), pp. 153-4.

[9] London, LMA, MJ/SR/2363, HOC, 12 April 1721.

[10] London, LMA, MJ/SR/2376, HOC, 4 December 1721.

[11] R.F.B. Hodgkinson (ed.), 'Extracts from the Act books of the Archdeaconry of Nottingham II', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 30 (Nottingham, 1926), 11-57; p. 44.

within this Citie, or Whistle after the houre of nyne of the clocke in the night.' Compared to the fines set for other misdemeanours, the punishment - 'under paine of imprisonment' - was relatively severe.[12] Three apprentices appeared before the Court of Common Council of London in 1630 for 'assembling themselves and lewde p[er]sons beating upp the drum in a tumultious manner in little Moorefields' at nine o'clock at night and were committed to Bridewell.[13] For their attendance at a night funeral for trumpeter Samuel Underhill, who died of the plague in 1636, eleven men were committed to Newgate 'until his Majesties pleasure bee knowne.' It was recorded that this posse had carried Underhill's body to his grave 'with trumpettes sounded and swordes drawne'.[14]

The control of the parish bells

The control of the parish bells was a more complicated matter than the control of civic signalling instruments. The importance of parish bells is indisputable, they were intimately connected with authority and truth, they rang news and warnings from the centre of a parish to its edges, they could gather people together and could signal loyalty or respect. As the potential for their abuse was a serious issue, and could cause disruption or danger, the bells were subject to tight control. Although the belfry could be locked against those seeking to abuse or misuse the bells, access was granted for a variety of ecclesiastical and secular

---

12 *Lawes of the Market* (1595), facs edn (Amsterdam, 1974), no. 22.

13 London, CLRO, Rep. 44, fol. 229.

14 London, LMA, MJ/GBR/4, Gaol Delivery Register, October 1629 - February 1644, fol. 234; John Cordy Jeaffreson (ed.), *Middlesex County Records III*, Middlesex County Record Society (London, 1888), pp. 62-4; The severity of this punishment might be explained by the combination of offences committed in addition to the unauthorised blowing of trumpets. The numbers of people permitted to attend funerals during epidemics were limited, this crowd would have probably exceeded the numbers permitted, Paul Slack, *The Impact of the Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 296-7. The offence of carrying a weapon which might frighten others is detailed by Lambard and Dalton, see; William Lambard, *Eirenarcha or of the office of the justices of peace* (London, 1581), pp. 132, 177; Michael Dalton, *The Countrey Justice. Conteyning the practise of the Justices of the peace out of the sessions* (London, 1618), pp. 28-30.

ringings. Various bodies were permitted to use the bells to convey their messages; from the local vestry to the national monarchy. Control of the bells was contestable as various authorities sought either to limit some types of ringing or to enforce others. By first exploring the management and purchase of the bells, and then considering declarations of ownership, I will start to unravel the complicated tangle of control which surrounded them. Next I will consider who rang the bells, who paid for the ringings, who prevented particular ringings and who enforced others. This discussion culminates in an examination of uses of bells *in extremis*. When the bells were damaged and needed to be used sparingly, or when society in a state of upheaval, whose message did the bells express? Whose needs were prioritised?

The high costs incurred through parish bell maintenance and ringing indicated their pivotal role in community life. When bells or bell equipment needed to be replaced or recast the costs could be covered by a variety of means. Individuals occasionally gave generous donations and the tenor bell of St. Bartholomew's church, Basildon, cast in 1621, was inscribed 'In true desier for to do well the Lady Litcot gave this Bell'.[15] Other benefactors paid for ringing equipment and apparatus. Richard Holden of East Wittering leased land to maintain the parish bellropes of nearby Sidlesham but was presented in 1623 because the churchwardens had claimed that he 'doth it not.'[16] When a local worthy did not offer donations, the parishioners would be taxed or encouraged to donate money. In the late-seventeenth century, Mr Woodward argued that he should not pay a tax to cover the new casting of the bells of the parish in which he owned land, but did not reside. He took his case to King's Bench, where it was judged that owning lands in a parish made a person liable to pay such a tax.[17]

---

[15] F. Sharpe, *The Church Bells of Berkshire. Their inscriptions and founders*, 2nd edn (Bath, 1970), p. 29. For similar donations see pp. 38, 194.
[16] Hilda Johnstone (ed.), *Churchwardens' Presentments (Seventeenth Century) part 1, Archdeaconry of Chichester*, Sussex Record Society, 49 (Lewes, 1948), p. 79.
[17] *Woodward v Makepeace* (1689), in William Salkeld, *Reports of Cases Adjudge'd in the Court of*

When the bell of Sutton church, near Chichester, broke in 1622, 'by the consent of the whole parrishioners it was concluded and agreed upon that the bell should bee new cast' and those refusing to contribute were named.[18] In desperation the churchwardens of West Tarring in Sussex dipped into the poor mans' box to pay the bellfounder in 1577.[19]

In 1583 William Lambard described the law which gave the church the right of ownership over donated bells; 'if a man do buy a Bell, and doe hang it up in the steeple ... and doe neither make any work or writing thereof, yet is this Bell ... by this dedicated or given to the Church.'[20] By inserting a clause into any documentation of donation, the rights of usage could be retained and determined by the benefactor. When an inventory of the bells of Moulton church in Northamptonshire was compiled in 1552, the 'Mote-bell' was listed separately from the others. The commissioners noted that this bell was purchased by two parishioners and was designated 'by the consent of the hooll p[ar]yshe' for use as a clock bell, an alarm and 'for the gatherynge togyther the Inhabytants of the sayd towne to the Courte & other theyr necessaryes' but it was 'not gyven to the sayd churche.'[21]

Duty of care for the bells fell to the churchwardens, who, by a royal order of 1561, were prohibited from selling or destroying them 'without sufficient matter shown to the archbishop of the province', and could only remove them for

---

King's Bench, 3rd edn, 2 vols (London, 1717), I, p. 164. Woodward also tried to argue that bells were merely 'ornamental' items, and thus should not be paid for by a tax, but this was dismissed by the court, who pronounced that bells 'were as necessary as the Steeple, which is of no use without the Bells'.

[18] Johnstone (ed.), *Churchwardens' Presentments of Chichester*, p. 46.

[19] W.J. Pressey (ed.), 'The churchwardens' accounts of West Tarring', *Sussex Notes and Queries*, 4 (1933), 199-203, p. 201.

[20] William Lambard, *The duties of Constables, Borsholders, Tithingmen, and such other low Ministers of the Peace* (London, 1583), p. 44.

[21] Thomas North, *Church bells of Northamptonshire: their inscriptions, traditions, and peculiar uses* (Leicester, 1878), p. 339; Sidney Madge, *Moulton Church and its Bells* (London, 1895), p. 28.

repairs.[22] Archbishop Grindal's injunctions for the province of York in 1571 forbade churchwardens from selling or alienating the bells without written consent from the Ordinary.[23] Several presentments of churchwardens during the period detailed lapses in bell maintenance. The rector of Lambley presented his churchwardens to the Archdeaconry court of Nottingham in May 1592 for their refusal to replace a bell rope.[24] The biggest bell of Selsey in Sussex was reported to be broken in 1621 and the little bell of Willingdon, another Sussex parish, was 'out of repair' in 1674.[25] A more desperate situation was evident in Denton in 1675 when the churchwardens admitted that 'wee have not ... a bell to call the people to church' and at the same time, in another Sussex village, a collapsing steeple rendered bellringing hazardous. The people of Arlington could not use their bells in 1677 since the great bell was broken and the hanging of the two smaller bells was so precarious 'that the clarke may be indamaged' if he attempted to ring them.[26] Theft of church bells was classed as trespass under common law and a person caught stealing bells or bell equipment from a church would have answered for the crime at a sessions of the peace.[27] Two men who rang the bells of Eccles at midnight in 1591 would probably not have appeared at the Lancashire

---

22 W.H. Frere (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the period of the Reformation III 1559-1575*, Alcuin Club Collections, 16 (London, 1910), p. 109. The instructions to the commissioners who compiled the inventories of church goods in 1552 gave them the power to force parishes to 'safely kepe unspoiled unembesiled and unsold' all the bells of the parish, J.R. Nichols, *Bells Thro' the Ages. The Founders' Craft and the Ringers' Art* (London, 1928), p. 263; see also 'Archdeacon Edward Layfield's Articles for Essex Archdeaconry' (1637) in K. Fincham (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church* (Woodbridge, 1994), p. 47.

23 Frere (ed.), *Visitation articles and injunctions 1559-1757*, p. 283; see also 'Archbishop Parker's articles for cathedrals in the Canterbury province' (1560), p. 77 .

24 Hodgkinson (ed.), 'Act Books of the Archdeacons of Nottingham II', p. 30.

25 Johnstone (ed.), *Churchwardens' Presentments of Chichester*, p. 2 and Hilda Johnstone (ed.), *Churchwardens' Presentments (Seventeenth Century) part 2, Archdeaconry of Lewes*, Sussex Record Society, 50 (Lewes, 1949), p. 9; see also Sidney A. Peyton (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Presentments in the Oxfordshire Peculiars of Dorchester, Thame and Banbury 1600-1834*, Oxfordshire Record Society, 10 (Oxford, 1928), p. 45.

26 Johnstone (ed.), *Churchwardens' Presentments of Lewes*, pp. 21, 26, 29, 60.

27 Lambard, *The duties of Constables*, pp. 44-5.

quarter sessions if they had not also stolen the bell clappers after they had disturbed the slumbering town, but might instead have been presented to the church court.[28]

The responsibility for ringing the bells at due times depended on the purpose of the ring. The sexton, or his employee, were usually responsible for diurnal morning and evening ringings and always for church services chiming. In 1616 the Dean and Chapter of Chichester cathedral church stipulated that only the sextons should ring to call the congregation to divine service and not children.[29] For more elaborate ringing upon more than one bell, the church needed to engage the services of bellringers. During the period, bell ringing as a leisure activity increased in popularity, creating a pool of competent ringers. Stipended bellringers, who rang on a part-time basis, were employed by the authorities to ring the bells on special occasions such as royal visits and by couples for their weddings. Six honest and able men were appointed as the ringers of the bells of St Martin's, Leicester in 1664, receiving four shillings apiece per year.[30] Ringers were sometimes paid with food and drink. Levels of remuneration for special ringings would have depended on local tradition, the degree to which the ringers were organised and the duration and purpose of the ringing.

Senior local church figures were responsible for instructing the timing and duration of ecclesiastical chimings. When the Leicester ringers were appointed it was recorded that they would ring and chime 'on Sundays, holydays, and other days, as the churchwardens shall appoint'.[31] Bells or ringers could be injured when unqualified people rang them. As a consequence of the third bell of Chichester

---

[28] James Tait (ed.), *Lancashire Quarter Sessions Rolls 1590-1606*, The Chetham Society, new ser., 77 (Manchester, 1917), p. 19. See also the decision reached by the dean and chapter of Chichester when bells were stollen from the cathedral in January 1554 , W.D. Peckham (ed.), *The Acts of the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral Church of Chichester, 1545-1642*, Sussex Record Society, extra ser., 58 (Lewes, 1960), p. 22.

[29] Peckham (ed.), *Dean and Chapter Acts of Chichester,* p. 207.

[30] John Charles Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts from the fourteenth century to the close of the seventeenth century* (London, 1913), p. 213.

[31] *ibid.*, p. 214.

Cathedral Church being damaged by an unskilled deputy, from the end of the sixteenth century deputising without permission from the Dean or President of the church was prohibited.[32]

In towns, the cost of ringing the morning and evening bell and maintaining the clock was often covered by the civic authorities who were aware of the great benefits such regular ringings would bring.[33] Early-seventeenth century discussions in Southampton centred on a disagreement between the civic and parish authorities over the supposed ancient obligation of the town to maintain the clock of St Michael's church. The parish authorities claimed that they had given to the town 'certayne vestmentes and jewells of the churche to the valew of lix li'. The town assembly agreed to investigate the matter in November 1606 but it was not resolved until a year later when the town agreed to maintain and repair the clock and chimes 'accordinge to certaine covenantes and agreementes <longe> manie yeares sithence agreed upon between the Towne and that parishe'. The town henceforth paid two shillings and eight pence each year, on the condition that the parish would cover the costs of any immediately necessary repairs.[34] Town authorities would also pay for some honorific or broadcast ringings. In 1679 the Mayoral Court of Norwich decreed that all parishes which rang five bells to celebrate the suppression of the revolt of the Scottish Covenanters should be paid a total of four pounds and twelve shillings. A special exception was made for St George's parish of Colegate, Norwich, which only had three bells, but was paid five shillings for ringing because it was the parish in which the mayor lived.[35]

---

[32] Peckham (ed.), *Dean and Chapter Acts of Chichester*, pp. 109, 206.
[33] For such arrangements in Liverpool and Bristol see Twemlow (ed.), *Liverpool Town Books*, I, pp. 176, 270; II, pp. 131, 402, 511; H.E. Nott (ed.), *The Deposition Books of Bristol. Vol.1; 1643-1647*, Publications of the Bristol Record Society, 6 (Bristol, 1935), p. 269.
[34] W.J. Connor (ed.), *The Southampton Mayor's Book of 1606-1608*, Southampton Record Society, 21 (Shouthampton, 1978), p. 52 (18 November 1606); p. 106 (6 November 1607).
[35] Rye (ed.), 'Extracts from the Court Books of the City of Norwich', p. 153 (5 July 1679).

Benefactions and payments from individuals could ensure ringing occurred on a range of occasions. Individuals could leave money or allocate rental income from land (sometimes known as 'bell-string acres') to fund regular ringings. When, in 1664, Richard Palmer gave land in order to pay the Wokingham sexton to ring the great bell each evening and for half an hour at four each morning between September and March, he reasoned that this might induce 'as many as might live within the sound ... to a timely going to rest in the evening, and early arising in the morning to the labours and duties of their several callings'.[36] Superficially this seems like a patriarchal and selfless gesture, yet these individuals might have been motivated to donate ringings for less altruistic purposes. Employers, for example, might have found that ringings promoted good time-management amongst their employees. Alternatively, benefactors might have wanted an ecclesiastical remembrance issued in their names after their death. Sir Dudley Digges left money in 1638 to pay the young men of Chilham in Kent to ring in remembrance of him.[37] Such behaviour seems to contradict the aims of the sixteenth-century reformers.

The ecclesiastical authorities, both local and central, attempted to control the use of the bells which hung in their churches. This was achieved by specifying when they needed to be rung and when they could not be. Ringing (as opposed to chiming the hours, or for services) was permitted only at the times appointed in the *Advertisements for due order* (1566); namely for ringing a person's passing, death, or funeral. Certain injunctions proscribed the form and style of ringing permissible on other occasions. Parsons, vicars and curates were urged in 1571 to

---

[36] E.P. Thompson, 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism', *Past and Present*, 38 (1967), 56-97, pp. 63-4.

[37] J. C. L. Stahlschmidt, *The Church Bells of Kent: their inscriptions, founders, uses and traditions* (London, 1887), p. 222. Stahlschmidt doubted the altruism of donors, noting that many claim, conveniently, that they were lost in the dark one night, and were guided back home by the sound of the parish bells, and wished to preserve ringing for future souls lost in the dark. Many bell inscriptions suggest a desire to be remembered after death through ringing.

'take heed that young men, especially countrymen (whose nature is more prone to the contempt of godliness and disorder) neither ring bells' or create other distractions during the services.[38] Churchwardens were also ordered to prevent the ringing of bells superstitiously, during the eve or feast of All Souls, 'neither at any time at all, whereas the custom of ringing shall seem to incline to superstition.' Presentations for irreligious and superstitious ringings were fairly common in the mid- to late-sixteenth century.[39] Unlike many other more surreptitious acts of nonconformity, illicit ringings were by their nature overt, since the whole parish would hear them. When these rules were flouted, the perpetrators were presented to the church courts. Robert Stringefellowe of Kirby Overbellows in Yorkshire admitted to 'suspicious ringing' in 1564.[40] Eight men from South Leverton were fined at the archdeacon's court of Nottingham for ringing on All Saints Day in 1583. William Fearnebarne from Hickling was presented in 1587 for ringing on All Saints Eve, and for using 'violence agaynst the parsone at that tyme to maytayne theire ringing'. In 1604 the rector of Cotgrave felt compelled to use physical force when he attempted to prevent four men from ringing on the feast of St Stephen. When they refused to stop he struck them with a small cudgel.[41]

Sometimes discretion was exercised by church officials and forbidden ringings were overlooked, but they risked being presented for turning a deaf ear to the sound of these ringings. The churchwardens of two villages near Worksop were presented to the archdeacon's court of Nottingham in November 1573 for allowing such ringing in their parishes.[42] The churchwardens of St Nicholas,

---

[38] Gerald Bray (ed.), *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, Church of England Record Series, 6 (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 167, 189-95.
[39] Frederick George Emmison, *Elizabethan Life: morals and the Church Courts*, Essex Record Office Publications, 63 (Chelmsford, 1973), pp. 137-8
[40] John Stanley Purvis (ed.), *Tudor Parish Documents of the Diocese of York: a Selection with Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge, 1948), p. 175.
[41] Hodgkinson (ed.), 'Act Books of the Archdeacon of Nottingham II', pp. 28-30.
[42] ibid., p. 29.

Strood included a curious entry in their accounts of 1621 where the cost of mending the great bell was qualified with the comment 'being the 30 daye of october'. Although this might indicate advance preparation for ringing during the following week to celebrate the failed gunpowder plot, the timing suggests that this could be evidence of preparations for illicit ringing on All Soul's eve or day.[43]

Canon 88 (1603) gave the first official endorsement to the use of discretion by local church officials in sanctioning ringing. Whilst forbidding superstitious ringing, this canon added the clause that ringing should also be prohibited by churchwardens 'at any other tymes, *without good cause to be allowed by the minister of the place, and by themselves.*'[44] This reflects the *ad hoc* control of bells evident during the period; under certain circumstances agreed restrictions could be ignored under the guidance of the clergy. A Chapter Act crafted for Chichester Cathedral Church in 1583 decreed that the ringers could not ring peals 'save at the usual times' without permission from the dean or the president of the church. Access to the belfry was tightly controlled in many parishes. Only the sextons and ringers could enter the steeple of Chichester without permission from the dean or president. In May 1587 Chichester sexton John Garlic was accused of 'suffering folk to goe up in the steeple ... and for suffering straungers to ring, contrary to the monicion whereby a bell ys latelye broken'.[45] Some clergy fitted locks to the belfry door to avoid unauthorised access and the churchwardens of St Nicholas, Strood included the costs of a lock for the 'belfrye dore' in 1592 and

---

[43] Henry R. Plomer (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Nicholas, Strood*, Kent Archaeological Society Record Series, 5 (Canterbury, 1927), p. 136.
[44] Bray (ed.), *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, p. 383 - my emphasis.
[45] Peckham (ed.), *Dean and Chapter Acts of Chichester*, pp. 109, 118, 207; see also p. 142.

again in 1614.[46] In spite of similar precautions, when they were determined, some parishioners would break into the belfry to ring without permission.[47]

Local church officials also took exception to honorific ringings which were made for people not deemed sufficiently worthy of them, or to sounds issued at inappropriate times. Henry Hargrave of Normanton on Trent was presented to the Nottingham archdeacon's court in 1631 'for hiring three men to ring at [an] unfitt tyme betwixt nyght & day after sunsetting' in honour of a friend who was visiting him.[48] The churchwardens of Banbury presented John Ball in 1610 'for procuring the Bell to be knoled for John Smith in mockery'.[49] Crying wolf on the bells could endanger the welfare of the community and so John Hudson of Kingston was presented to the court of the Archdeacon of Nottingham in May 1625 for

> ringing the bells in the church out of order and turning them over & some times leaving them standing on end and the winde blowing them downe in the night as though some thing were amisse by fier in the towne.[50]

However, ecclesiastic regulations only concerned ringings for religious purposes, and neither prohibited nor authorised ringings for secular purposes.

Bishops and archbishops could, and occasionally did, impose fines on parishes which failed to ring when they had passed through on their visitation business. The bells of St Oswald, Durham remained silent when the Bishop passed through in 1630, and the church was fined 'for not ringing'. The parish ensured that the bells sounded on his return.[51]

---

[46] Plomer (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Nicholas, Strood*, pp. 68, 112. See also J.S. Craig, 'Co-operation and Initiatives - Elizabethan churchwardens' accounts and the parish accounts of Mildenhall', *Social History*, 18 (1990), 357-80, pp. 377-8.
[47] 'The diary of Arthur Jessop' in C.E. Whiting (ed.), *Two Yorkshire Diaries. The diary of Arthur Jessop and Ralph Ward's journal*, The Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 117 (Wakefield, 1952), p. 131 (25 April 1746).
[48] R. F. B. Hodgkinson (ed.), 'Extracts from the Act Books of the Archdeaconry of Nottingham III' *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 31 (Nottingham, 1927), p. 137; see also p. 138.
[49] Peyton (ed.), *Churchwardens' presentments of Oxfordshire*, p. 204.
[50] Hodgkinson (ed.), 'Act Books of the Archdeacon of Nottingham III', p. 137.
[51] J. Barmby (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of Pittington and other parishes in the Diocese of*

The parish bells hung in the church, ecclesiastical authorities authorised regular ringings and the local clergy held the keys to the belfry, yet churches did not enjoy full autonomy over the bells. Whilst it was supposed to be a spontaneous expression of joy and delight, if a parish neglected to ring for the monarch's removes the royal almoners were at liberty to levy a fine on them, and if this was not paid the parish would be liable to have the belfry doors sealed up until payment was received. The Lambeth churchwardens paid a fine of two shillings in 1579 for failing to ring for the queen, and likewise the churchwardens of Shillington, in Bedfordshire listed five shillings to the 'Queene's Almner for the bell stock' in their accounts for 1590. [52]

The use of the parish bells could be prohibited by the King's Commissioners if they had been used for disloyal or treacherous ends. In a Privy Council order to confiscate the parish bells of Devon and Cornwall following rebellion in 1549, bells were described as 'an instrument to stir the multitude and call them together'. A letter signed by the Duke of Somerset recommended that all bells bar the smallest, which could be used to call the church congregations, should be removed to avoid future misuse, but that such a removal should be carried out discreetly to create 'as little offence to the common people as may be.' A compromise was reached and only the clappers were removed, rendering the bells temporarily mute.[53] A similar order was issued by William Cecil in 1569

Durham, from A.D. 1580 to 1700, The Surtees Society, 84 (Durham, 1888), p. 184; see also Stahlschmidt, *The Church Bells of Kent*, p. 298.

[52] Charles Drew (ed.), *Lambeth Churchwardens' Accounts, 1504-1645, and Vestry book, 1610*, Surrey Record Society, 2 vols (18 and 20) (London, 1941-2), I, p. 136; J.E. Farmiloe and Rosita Nixseaman (eds), *Elizabethan Churchwardens' Accounts*, Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 33 (Streatley, 1953), p. xxi. See also John Gough Nichols (ed.), *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, The Camden Society, new ser., 13 (London, 1875), p. 310 (19 June 1563).

[53] John Strype, *Ecclesisatical Memorials, Relating chiefly to Religion, and the Reformation of it, and the emergences of the Church of England under King Henry VIII, King Edward VI and Queen Mary I*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1882), II, part 1 (of 2), p. 270.

following the Northern Rising, decreeing that 'whenever any bells were rung to raise rebellion only one bell is to be left in the steeple in memory thereof'.[54]

Local government officials were responsible for ensuring that certain types of ringing were encouraged. The bells of Great Yarmouth rang 'by Mr Bailiff's order' during the Commonwealth to mark the day that Cromwell assumed the title of Lord Protector.[55] The ringers of St. Edmund's, Salisbury rang to celebrate the overthrow of the Scots in 1650 'per order of Mr. Maior'.[56] London journalist Joseph Mead described the admonishment of the Lord Mayor of London in 1630 by the Lords of the Council 'because he suffered the bells to stand silent' on the king's birthday (19th November), while they had rung for two nights previously to remember the coronation of Elizabeth I.[57]

Despite attempts to control the bells by local and national secular and ecclesiastical authorities, if the ringers refused to ring, the bells would remain silent. In 1579 the ringers of St. Peter's, Exeter refused to ring the great bell in the morning and evening 'because the Stypend to be collected is not quarterlye payde in such Order as it was fyrst agreed upon' and, additionally, that the pay was 'to [sic] lyttle & smale'. The corporation agreed to increase the bellringers' salary through tax rises in nineteen parishes and by requesting money from trade companies.[58]

Arrangements concerning ringings were occasionally established locally as a collaboration between clerical and civic authorities. In 1593 the 'neighbours of [West] Tarring' in Sussex agreed that 'no knylles shall be rung for any of Heene &

---

[54] Nichols, *Bells thro' the ages*, pp. 261-2. Edwin Hadlow Wise Dunkin, *Church Bells of Cornwall: Their Archaeology and Present Condition* (London, 1878) p. 4.
[55] David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells. National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (London, 1989), p. 78.
[56] Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 222.
[57] Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, p. 60.
[58] Walter J. Harte, J.W. Schopp and H. Tapley-Soper (eds), *The description of the citie of Excester, by John Vowell alias Hoker, gentleman and chamberlayne of the same*, Publications of the Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 3 vols (Exeter, 1919-47), III, p. 931.

Derington [Durrington] except the rycher sortt paie xijd the pore iiijd'.[59] At the end of the sixteenth century, and by 'the Whole Consent of the Parish', the cost of knelling on the great bell of St John's church in Winchester was one shilling for a parishioner and more than three times that for a stranger.[60] At a general meeting involving the representatives of both civic and ecclesiastical authorities of Leeds in June 1632 it was agreed that funeral ringing should be more tightly controlled. Noting that previously ringing at funerals had been 'left at the discretion of the Ringers who regarded nothing else but their own pleasure and profits', details were listed at this meeting of the expenses incurred by 'the disorderly and much ringing of the bell.' It was agreed that no more that two peals were to be rung for the dead 'unless some friend of the deceased shall willingly pay unto one of the Clarks the sum of Two Shillings' and that only the smallest and greatest bells should be 'tolled and rung at the Soul Knell of every person dying within the said parish'. The little bell was free but the great bell cost 12d to toll.[61] After 1611 the cathedral bells of Chichester could not be rung for funerals unless the choir was engaged to attend the corpse to the church, and this service was not free.[62] At a meeting of the vestry of All Saints, Newcastle in 1655, whilst it was noted that there were reservations, it was agreed that a resumption of tolling the passing bell after a lapse of twelve years would raise revenue for 'dilapidations'.[63] These agreements displayed more than a desire to rationalise ringings, they indicated a flair for lucrative exploitation of the bells. They also suggest that there was considerable local variation in ringing traditions.

---

[59] W. J. Pressey (ed.), 'The churchwardens' accounts of West Tarring', *Sussex Notes and Queries*, 8 (1942), 78-9, p. 79.
[60] John Foster Williams, *The Early Churchwardens' Accounts of Hampshire* (Winchester, 1913), p. 179.
[61] 'Bell-ringing at Leeds in 1632. A note in the handwriting of Ralph Thoresby', *Miscellanea VI*, The Thoresby Society, 22 (Leeds, 1915), p. 234.
[62] Peckham (ed.), *Dean and Chapter Acts of Chichester*, p. 191.
[63] Henry Bourne *Antiquitates Vulgares; Or, the Antiquities of the Common People* (Newcastle, 1725), p. 6.

The sound of tolling bells took on a new significance during periods of high mortality, when their sound was omnipresent. During the various epidemics which plagued London in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, bells were heard frequently, marking the deaths and funerals of those struck down by illness. In *The Wonderfull Yeare* (1603), Thomas Dekker's 'picture of London lying sicke of the Plague' includes the sounds of knocking up the sexton and ringing bells make 'the dismal consort more full'.[64] Lying in his sick bed in 1623, suffering from relapsing fever, and living 'so near to that steeple [St Paul's] which never ceases', John Donne was deeply affected by the 'hourley' bells which sounded the burials of his neighbours.[65] During the epidemic of 1665 Samuel Pepys noted the frequent tolling and ringing with woe. On 30 July he penned the following words; 'It was a sad noise to hear our Bell to toll and ring so often today, either for deaths or burials; I think five or six times.'[66]

In *News from Graves End* (1604), Dekker regretted that 'No musick now is heard but bells, And all their tunes are sick men's knells' and he argued that it was no longer possible to ring for each passing or 'Men should be deaffe' with the sound, so instead 'now one knell,/ Gives with his Iron voyce this doome,/ That twentie shall but have one roome.'[67] Echoing this, another author described the London bells during the 1625 plague outbreak, which issued 'Nothing but calls to Death; nothing but Knells ... by Night dolefull Towling, as by Day.[68] Writing of the 1665 epidemic the physician Nathaniel Hodges remarked that 'the Bells seemed hoarse with continal tolling until at last they quite ceased.'[69]

---

[64] Frank Percy Wilson (ed.), *The Plague Pamphlets of Thomas Dekker* (Oxford, 1925), pp. 27-8.
[65] Neil Rhodes (ed.), *John Donne. Selected Prose* (London, 1987) , pp. 124-5.
[66] *Pepys*, VI, pp. 170, 175 (26 and 30 July 1665)
[67] Thomas Dekker, *News from Graves End (*1604), repr. in Wilson (ed.), *Plague Pamphlets of Thomas Dekker*, p. 94.
[68] T[h]om[as] B[rewer], *The Weeping Lady: Or, London like Ninivie in Sack-Cloth* (London, 1625), sigs B1r-v. See also London, GL, MS 204, Nehemiah Wallington, 'A Record of the Mercies of God: or A Thankfull Remembrance', p. 407.
[69] Nath[aniel] Hodges, *Loimologia: or, an Historical Account of the Plague in London in 1665: with*

In September 1592 'extraordinary' ringing was prohibited in London and such regulations were issued periodically, as the plague epidemics peaked.[70] Dekker noted that victims of the 1602 plague epidemic were buried 'without the dead mans musick (his *Bell.*)'[71] By the orders of 1636 a temporary ban was placed on tolling bells in London and similar orders appeared in other cities and towns. The Norwich 'Orders for the infected' (1637) included the following prohibition; 'Noe Chymeing of Bells or concourse of people be permitted at such [plague victims'] burialls'.[72] Temporary arrangements which restricted ringings during periods of high mortality were a practical method to solve the problem of excess demand; if the bells had rung for all dead and dying then the noise of the ringing would have caused dismay amongst the citizens and created too great a burden for the sexton and the bells.

It was not just when pestilence struck that bell use was restricted; limits were also applied when the bells became too fragile to ring safely. The occasions of ringing in St. Oswald's parish, Durham, followed a fairly regular pattern from the start of James I's reign. An abrupt cessation of ringing in 1608 was probably the result of bell-fatigue, as a new bell was cast in 1610.[73] Under such conditions of *extremis*, decisions about ringing would be made on the ground. When the tower of St Edmund's, Salisbury, became unstable in June 1653, the sexton was ordered to ring only the tenor bell, and only for a knell or to call to sermons. Shortly after he was instructed to ring the treble instead of the tenor bell for the service call at five o'clock in the morning. At an emergency parish meeting held a

---

precautionary Directions against the like Contagion, trans. John Quincy (London, 1720), p. 18.

[70] Frank Percy Wilson, *Plague in Shakespeare's London* (Oxford, 1927), p. 177.

[71] Thomas Dekker, *The Seven deadlie Sinns of London: Drawne in seven severall Coaches, Through the seven severall Gates of the Citie. Bringing the plague with them* (1606), ed. H.F.B. Brett-Smith (Oxford, 1922), p. 56.

[72] Wilson, *Plague in Shakespeare's London*, p. 178; William L. Sachse (ed.), *Minutes of the Norwich Court of Mayorality, 1630-1631*, Norfolk Record Society, 15 (London, 1942), pp. 253-4. See also Slack, *The Impact of the Plague*, p. 297.

[73] Barmby (ed.), *Churchwardens' Accounts of the Diocese of Durham*, pp. 149-57.

little later, the churchwardens decided that all bells except the great bell should be removed from the tower. Prioritisation of ringing is evident throughout this crisis, and the service tolling was the last ringing to be halted.[74] After the collapse of the steeple in 1701, the five bells of Shillington were stored in a box, but a saints' bell was rigged to the top of the church 'to give notice to sinners of their duties'.[75] 1630 was the only year for which ringing was not listed in the churchwardens' accounts for St Mary's, Reading, and, uniquely, the entry for that year lists a payment to the 'belman for Crying the church gate'. This was presumably as an alternative to the church bells, which were probably damaged, as work was carried out on them the following year.[76]

Signals could be issued by legitimate authority to warn citizens, to broadcast news and to express loyalty, but they could also be utilised by those seeking to overthrow established authority as shown in the Cornish and Northern rebellions. By examining periods of political turmoil it might be possible to consider whether there was any truth in a comment made by journalist Ned Ward at the turn of the eighteenth century, that control exercised over the bells was fluid, because;

> guns, like bells, are as great turncoats as those that command 'em, meaning parsons and officers. For the one will roar, the other ring, the third preach, and the fourth fight, for any power that's uppermost.[77]

By examining the uses of parish bells and other signalling equipment during periods of political turmoil, when at times it was unclear which power was 'uppermost', it will be possible to gain greater understanding of the control of

---

[74] Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 76.
[75] L. H. Chambers (ed.), 'Bedfordshire Bells, c. 1710', *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society*, 12 (Aspley Guise, 1928) 99-101, p. 101.
[76] Francis N. A. Garry and A. G. Garry (eds), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of the parish of St Mary's, Reading, Berkshire, 1550-1662* (Reading, 1893), pp. 145-7.
[77] Ned Ward, *The London-Spy, Compleat, In Eighteen Parts* (orig. publ. 1698-1700), 4th edn (1709), repr. by Paul Hyland (East Lansing, Mich., 1993) p. 234.

ringing apparatus. Bellringing during the Civil War; the years leading up to the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688; and during the Pretender's Rebellion in 1745-6, illuminate the political allegiances of some parishes.

During the Civil War the bells in royalist strongholds rang for royal victories, and those in parliamentary strongholds rang for royal defeats.[78] In some parishes a lack of loyalty to the King was demonstrated by lack-lustre, or abandoned ringing for the monarchy. The ringers of St Mary's, Reading were paid seven shillings for the King's return from Scotland in 1641, but only one shilling and six pence when he returned from the Battle of Edgehill the following year.[79] Indeed, as Charles passed through Reading on this latter occasion, the relatively meagre ringing seems especially poignant.[80] Cavalier General, Lord Goring, fined St Edmund's Salisbury ten shillings for failing to ring the bells for him in 1645.[81] Some parishes were ambivalent, ringing for both sides on different occasions. Most London parishes observed Charles I's anniversaries throughout the 1640s, and some parishes rang in an exaggerated fashion for the anniversary of the King's coronation. However, Cressy points out that around 1647 some parishes also resumed the practice of ringing on 17th November to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's accession.[82] This could have been indicative of either a surge of royalist sentiment or of a harking back to glory days under a different monarch. In 1649 the regicide was marked by a perfunctory peal at St Mary's Cambridge, about which the parish accounts state 'we being thereto commanded by the Justices'.[83]

Another significant political flashpoint came during the reign of the Catholic king, James II. Relief at the failure of Monmouth's rebellion was

---

[78] Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, p. 77.
[79] Garry and Garry (eds), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of St Mary's, Reading*, pp. 162-3.
[80] Austin Woolrych, *Battles of the English Civil War*, repr. edn (London, 1991), p. 13.
[81] Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 216.
[82] Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, pp. 62-3.
[83] John James Raven, *The Bells of England* (London, 1906), p. 212.

expressed by bell-ringing across the country, even three hundred miles away in Durham.[84] The bells of St Thomas', Salisbury gave a ringing endorsement when MP Colonel John Wyndham returned home after leading his troops to victory at Sedgemoor.[85] In April 1688, the Declaration of Indulgence, which suspended penal laws against Catholics was reissued. Seven bishops who petitioned against it in May were prosecuted and imprisoned in the Tower. News of their acquittal in June was greeted by bellringing in Bristol, Peterborough, Dorchester, and many other towns.[86] Ringings in the capital would have been heard by the King and his circle and, according to John Evelyn, were 'taken ill at Court'. Several days previously the Queen had given birth to the Prince of Wales, thus ensuring a Catholic dynasty, and this birth was greeted with unenthusiastic ringing in some parishes.[87] In a telling comment Symon Patrick, who was the dean of Peterborough, contrasted ringing in his parish for the acquittal of the seven bishops, which started at three o'clock in the afternoon and did not cease until late at night, with relatively restrained ringing for the Prince's birth, remarking 'So great a difference there is between that which is constrained, and that which is done voluntarily.'[88] Additionally, John Evelyn noticed that celebrations for the King's birthday were relatively muted in October 1688.[89]

---

[84] Barmby (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of the Diocese of Durham,* p. 208. For the use of drums during the Battle of Sedgemoor, in an account written by a drummer, see Henry Eliot Malden (ed.), 'Iter bellicosum: Adam Wheeler his account of 1685', in *The Camden Miscellany*, The Camden Society, 3rd ser., 18 (London, 1910), 153-68.

[85] Malden (ed.), 'Iter bellicosum, p. 158.

[86] Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 224; David Underdown, *Fire from Heaven; The Life of an English Town in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1992), p. 258.

[87] For examples see Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, pp. 78-9. Some parishes rang as usual, for example St Oswald's, Durham, in Barmby (ed.), *Churchwardens' Accounts of the Diocese of Durham*, pp. 208, 342. In Cambridge the bells of Great St Mary's rang and soldiers 'gave severall volleys of shott' from the 'Great Hill', J. E. Foster (ed.), *The Diary of Samuel Newton, Alderman of Cambridge 1662-1717* (Cambridge, 1890), p. 94 (11 June 1688). In London news of the Prince's birth was greeted with bellringing and 'tourne ordnance discharge', *Evelyn*, IV, pp. 586-7 (10-11 June 1688).

[88] Alexander Taylor (ed.), *The Works of Symon Patrick, sometime Bishop of Ely*, 9 vols (Oxford, 1858), IX, pp. 512-13.

[89] *Evelyn*, IV, p. 588 (15-17 June 1688); p. 601 (14 October 1688).

In December 1688 William and Mary were declared King and Queen to the sounds of drums, trumpets and loud public acclaim, and Evelyn described the ringing and shooting which accompanied their coronation the following February.[90] A letter from Lord Halifax to the sheriff of Cambridge ordered that the town, along with all others, should print the proclamations of William and Mary and publish them with the usual ceremony. As both the high sheriff and his deputy were enjoying the festivities in London when the letter arrived it remained unopened for two days. On their return hasty preparations were made for the proclamation to be issued and 'the Maior &c. proclaimed, attended by all the Military officers with their Trumpetts and Kettle drums ... alsoe the Towne waytes'. Bells rang all afternoon, and bonfires blazed all night. On the following day the vice-chancellor, masters and doctors of the university, upset that the town had upstaged them by proclaiming first, performed their own ceremony.[91]

Again, as during the Civil War, ringing in some parishes suggested impartiality. Payments ranging between six and seven shillings were made to the ringers of St Oswald, Durham for Monmouth's defeat in 1685, when the Queen was declared to be pregnant and for thanksgiving for birth of the Prince of Wales in 1688, yet they also rang for the Prince of Orange. The only hint of criticism expressed through ringing in this parish might be that ringers celebrating James II's birthday in 1685 received one shilling more than they did in 1688, but how this would have translated into the ringing is unclear; were fewer ringers and bells involved, or was the ringing relatively short-lived?[92]

Fifty years after the 'Glorious Revolution' Stephen Monteage wrote the following diary entry for 5 November 'This Day Anno 1605, was the Gun-Powder Treason, & the Same Day, Anno 1688 landed the Great King William the Third to

---

[90] *Evelyn*, IV, p. 623 (22 February 1689).
[91] Foster (ed.), *The Diary of Samuel Newton*, pp. 99-101 (18-19 February 1689).
[92] Barmby (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of the Diocese of Durham*, p. 208.

Rescue us from Popery, and Slavery, etc. Observ'd with Ringing of Bells, Gunns etc.'[93] Parish bells had been used during the late 1680s to express joy, show respect and indicate loyalties. Now, half a century later, the bells were employed to keep the memory of the past alive.

Lancashire doctor Richard Kay and Elizabeth Byrom, eldest daughter of Sir John Byrom, recorded the reactions around Manchester to the Jacobite rebellion of 1745-6, led by James II's grandson, 'Bonnie Prince Charlie', the 'Young Pretender', and apothecary Arthur Jessop described the mood in Holmfirth.[94] Recruitment by drumming up support as practised by the national militia was adopted by the rebel forces. Richard Kay heard that a sergeant and a drummer in the service of the Young Pretender came to Manchester in November 1745 to enlist supporters.[95] Elizabeth Byrom also mentioned this entry, remarking that two men in highland dress 'and a woman behind one of them with a drum on her knee ... beat up the volunteers'.[96] Bells were used to warn and orchestrate citizens in these moments of crisis. When rebels were feared to be heading to pull up Salford Bridge in November 1745, the citizens of Manchester planned to 'set the fire bells ringing to raise a mob to stop them'. When the rebels were thought to be returning to Manchester on 7th December Byrom noted 'they are ringing the fire bell as hard as they can' to raise a force to repel them. When the rebel forces were expected to invade London, the train-bands were ordered 'to be ready at the firing of seven guns from the Tower'.[97]

---

[93] London, GL, MS 205/2, 'The Diary of Stephen Monteage' (5 November 1738).
[94] W. Brockbank and F. Kenworthy (eds), *The Diary of Richard Kay 1716-51 of Baldingstone nr. Bury. A Lancashire doctor*, The Chetham Society, new ser., 16 (Manchester, 1968); 'The diary of Elizabeth Byrom' in R. Parkinson (ed.), *The Private Journal and Literary Remains of John Byrom*, 2 vols (each in two parts), The Chetham Society, old ser., vols 32, 34, 40 and 44 (Manchester, 1854-7), II, part 2, pp. 385-410; 'The Diary of Arthur Jessop' in Whiting (ed.), *Two Yorkshire Diaries.*
[95] Brockbank and Kenworthy (eds), *The Diary of Richard Kay*, p.102 (28 November 1745).
[96] Parkinson (ed.), 'The diary of Elizabeth Byrom', p. 389 (28 November 1745).
[97] ibid., p. 388 (26 November 1745); p. 397 (7 December 1745); p. 404 (23 December 1745).

Byrom's account highlights the 'double-tongued' nature of the church bells and how the services of the bellman could be commandeered in support of more than one party. On 25th November 1745 the bellman was paid one shilling by the constables to cry 'against bedding being removed out of the town'. Four days later the church bells rang when the Pretender and his retinue arrived in Manchester. The rebels left Manchester, but seemed poised to return, and on 8 December 1745, by order of Dr. Mainwaring and Justice Bradshaw, both staunch anti-Jacobites, the bellman announced a call for men to arm so they could assist in the repulsion of the rebel forces. The following day the rebel forces took Manchester, and by order of 'R[oyal] H[ighness] C[harles] P[rince] [of] W[ales]' the bellman issued an order to prevent more than two people gathering together at night. On 11th December the bells rang in expectation of the arrival of the king's son, the Duke of Cumberland, who was leading the counter-offensive against the rebels, and on his arrival the bellman rang to encourage the citizens to provide for his army.[98] In January 1746 the Manchester ringers celebrated the re-taking of Carlisle. Byrom wrote

> This morning we were waked with ringing for the taking of Carlisle again, but we hear no particulars, that the Duke is gone post to London; the bellman is going to-night to order every body to illuminate to-morrow night; there has been a great bonfire all day, and the bells have scarce ever ceased.[99]

The rebellion was quashed, and when news reached Leeds on 23 April 1746 that a mass slaughter and imprisonment of rebels had been commanded by the Duke of Cumberland the citizens reacted by ringing the church bells in joy. The next day, when the news reached Holmfirth, Honley, Penistone and Cawthorne, the reaction was identical. On the following day some Honley parishioners wanted

---

[98] Parkinson (ed.), 'The diary of Elizabeth Byrom', footnote 1, pp. 387, n.1, 392 (29 November 1745); pp. 397-8 (8 December 1745); p. 401 (11 December 1745).
[99] Parkinson (ed.), 'The diary of Elizabeth Byrom', p. 406 (2 January 1746).

to continue the celebratory ringing. When they were prevented from doing so by the vicar and refused the key they 'went in at the Bell holes to ring the bell.'[100]

Signalling activity during these years of crisis show that parishes used their signalling equipment in individual ways. Although the majority of ringings to celebrate events such as royal births, national victories and visits by important people were carried out without controversy, occasionally the parish bells expressed dissent. In times of heightened tension ringings could have indicated the political allegiances of a parish, normally in subtle, not blatantly partisan ways. Some parishes also revealed a determination to remain neutral by ringing for both parties.

Most of the evidence for parish bellringing is contained in churchwardens' accounts and it is necessary to be circumspect when attempting to interpret motivations and reactions from ringing expenses. Churchwardens were not uniformly diligent in their record keeping, so apparent lapses in ringings may be attributable to sloppy accounting. It is necessary to consider other factors before assuming that changing ringing patterns were caused by political motivations. In 1639 the Lambeth ringers received eight shillings for ringing on the king's birthday (19 November), and also for the coronation anniversary (27 March), the following year. Three years later the ringers received only six shillings for the coronation ringing and a mere two shillings for ringing on the king's birthday. Whilst these figures might indicate waning enthusiasm for the institution of monarchy, and especially for the person of Charles I, the reduced ringing might have simply been a consequence of the effects of the plague, which was ravaging Lambeth at that time, leaving a shortage of ringers.[101] Bearing these problems in mind, tentative comparisons can be made between ringings in one parish over a number of years.

---

[100] 'The diary of Arthur Jessop' in Whiting (ed.), *Two Yorkshire Diaries*, p. 131 (25 April 1746).
[101] Drew (ed.), *Lambeth Churchwardens' Accounts*, II, pp. 144, 171-2.

Comparisons between parishes might suggest interesting differences of patriotism and loyalty. David Underdown, comparing the ringing expenses of two Dorchester parishes in the 1670s and 1680s asserted that one was 'distinctly more patriotic and monarchistic' than the other.[102] However, such comparisons may not always be valid, as different parishes were not subject to the same restrictions and did not enjoy equal opportunities; they had different numbers of bells and the organisation of the ringers would have varied.

Successive monarchs encouraged supportive ringing, and could temporarily deny parishes their ringing apparatus if such encouragement was resisted, but they could not guarantee campanological obedience; enforcement would have been impossible. Ringing expenses listed in pounds, shillings and pence in the churchwardens' accounts probably indicated the duration and sophistication of ringing, but this cannot be stated assuredly. It is impossible to know from the accounts how the ringings sounded, and descriptions of ringings are rare. When ringings were prolonged and energetic they might have indicated a genuine enthusiasm. Dudley Ryder was pleased that George I's accession was commemorated in London in August 1715 by bells which 'rung very thoroughly and continued a long time'.[103] Ringing undertaken in a half-hearted or desultory manner might have indicated a lack of enthusiasm. As Symon Patrick pointed out, enthusiasm could not be enforced.[104]

The parish bells were a primary medium of communication and some control was necessary to protect their efficacy. Both ecclesiastical and civic authorities attempted to manage bell use in the early modern period, by ensuring that parishes had bells and by ensuring that they were used correctly. The sexton

---

[102] Underdown, *Fire from Heaven*, p. 249.
[103] *Dudley Ryder*, p. 66 (1 August 1715).
[104] Commenting on an order from the Lord Mayor to the constables to light bonfires in every street on the night of the Queen's birthday in November 1663, Pepys commented wrote 'methinks is a poor thing to be forced to be commanded.' *Pepys*, IV, p. 382 (15 November 1663).

or minister held the key to the belfry and refused entry to people they thought would damage the bells, or sought to ring for trivial or popish purposes. The secular utility of bells meant that ecclesiastical authorities could not have full control. Senior ecclesiastic figures and members of the royal family expected the bells to ring in their honour when they passed through the parish, and could deny the parishioners their bells if they failed to ring. When they deemed it necessary, members of the local or civic government encouraged ringings for political purposes, yet there was not a standardisation of ringing in early modern parishes, or a universally followed ringing calendar. Enforcement of ringing would have proved difficult, particularly when some parishes did not even have the wherewithal to ring. Prevention of ringing was likewise difficult, wilful parishioners could override prohibitions by breaking into the belfry to ring. Most ringing was uncontroversial and inoffensive, yet during crises local sentiments could be expressed through a selectivity in ringing. The controlling authority was not as clear cut as Ned Ward's comment implies; parsons could not always retain command over the bells, and they did not always ring in favour of the 'power that's uppermost'.

Chaotic signalling

When issued and understood correctly sound signals were a valuable means by which citizens could be gathered, warned, regulated, ranked and informed. However, sometimes signals were adopted and adapted for unofficial ends, we have seen in the last chapter how the men who went off to fight the Dutch 'let off their guns', and above, how rebel armies adopted the practises of the militia to gather support. The authorities found it difficult to retain control over their own equipment; controlling the equipment of others must have proved even more difficult. Yet, other factors also conspired against the authorities in their quest to

control signalling. Apparatus could fail and signals could be issued incorrectly. Even when signals were correctly issued, the response to these signals could not be guaranteed; they might be put to others ends, ignored, misunderstood, or misheard. For the remainder of this chapter I will consider these problems.

Signalling apparatus was not always reliable. Some signalling equipment malfunctioned and signals could be incorrect, inaccurate, imprecise, or misunderstood. The clerk of St Mary's, Reading received a wage increase in 1611 when the vestry gave him the additional duty of 'ordering & settinge of the Clocke to stryke & goe so nere as he can at due howres' and the lack of ambition evident in his contract is echoed in a proverb collected in the early-eighteenth century; 'The Clock goes, as it pleaseth the Clark'.[105] Clocks which told the wrong time or did not work at all would confuse and hinder parishioners. At a Southampton court leet held in 1576 it was recorded that 'the inhabitants of the town are deceved by the incorrectness of All S[ain]t's Clock.'[106] Some signals were issued by mistake. In April 1662, hearing news that the Queen had landed from Portugal, Pepys hurried to Whitehall, where the bells were ringing 'in several places'. The news turned out to be incorrect and the Queen did not land until almost one month later, when 'At night all the bells in the towne rung; and bonfires made for the joy of the Queenes arrival; who came and landed at Portsmouth last night.'[107] The ringers of Kensington were paid for broadcasting the news of 'Limerick's being taken' in 1691; the churchwardens adding 'and 'twas false' in their accounts.[108] In

---

[105] Sharpe, *The Church Bells of Berkshire*, p. 225; Thomas Fuller, *Gnomologia: Adagies and Proverbs, Wise Sentences and Witty Sayings, Ancient and Modern, Foreign and British* (London, 1732), no. 445.

[106] F. J. C. Hearnshaw, *Leet Jurisdiction in England, especially as illustrated by the Records of the Court Leet of Southampton*, Southampton Record Society, 5 (Southampton, 1908), p. 214.

[107] *Pepys*, III, p. 68 (21 April 1662), p. 83 (15 May 1662).

[108] Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, p. 224. These ringers received a paltry one shilling and six pence between them. It is not clear whether this was because the ringing was curtailed when the truth was discovered, and therefore the ringers were only employed for a short time, or because the payment reflected the failure to ring on the correct occasion.

Manchester, reports that Jacobite rebels had been defeated in November 1714 led to the ordering of bell-ringing to celebrate, but this was countermanded by the bellman when the news was found to be premature.[109]

Any analysis of the function and efficacy of sound signals must give regard to the ways that such sounds were actually received by the auditors, and how their messages were understood or acted upon. Ensuring that a sound was issued would not guarantee that the desired response to it would automatically follow. During the years of political crisis described above, it has been seen that parishes rang with varying levels of commitment. Likewise, the auditors would have greeted ringings with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Cressy notes that parishioners hearing the ringing for the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's coronation which resumed in the 1640s could have interpreted the sound in a variety of ways, some hearing 'a healing and conservative message in a time of great confusion', whilst others regarded it as provocative.[110]

Cressy also points out that the ringing to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's accession during her lifetime was in some places instead taken to perpetuate the memory of St Hugh of Lincoln, as 17 November was formerly his feast day, and consequently interpretation of this sound 'was a matter of custom, contexts, prompts, and inclination.'[111] Non-conformists, unable to ring bells of their own, might have scheduled their meetings around the bells which tolled for Anglican services. A letter in *The Spectator* purporting to be from the 'Under-Sexton' of St Paul's, Covent Garden was concerned with the hijack of the sound of the bell which tolled for services; 'I find my Congregation take the Warning of my Bell,

---

[109] John Harland (comp. and ed.), 'Diary of a Manchester Wig-Maker 1712-15', in *Collectanea relating to Manchester and its Neighbourhood at Various Periods*, Chetham Society, old ser., 68 (Manchester, 1866), p. 206 (13 November 1714). The bells did ring on the following day after reports that many rebels had surrendered were confirmed, p. 207 (14 November 1714).
[110] Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, pp. 62-3.
[111] *ibid.*, p. 51.

Morning and Evening, to go to a Puppet-Show set forth by one Powell under the Piazzas'.[112] If an unpopular figure visited a parish the bells which rang in welcome might have instead caused an angry crowd to gather to protest. Intended as an honorific greeting, signals could become a rallying cry for dissenters. When they heard bells ring for Bishop Matthew Wren, an angry mob gathered in Ipswich to protest.[113]

Ringing for church services might have been prioritised when bells were fragile, yet many people did not respond to these chimes. William Gurnall moaned that people ignored 'bells which call us to the worship of God' because 'prayers and sermons they care not for', remarking that if these bells rang to give notice of sporting or festive events 'O how soon should we have them flock together!'[114] Personal priorities determined which sounds an individual actively listened for and reacted to.

Those with responsibilities were expected to maintain a keen ear for the signals which called them to assemble or fight, or the sounds which indicated sea battles or the approach of enemy fleets. In his garden in Deptford in June 1666 John Evelyn heard 'Great guns go thick off' and rode immediately to Rochester and then to the coast. Arriving to present himself for action, Evelyn was informed that there was 'no noise, not appearance at Deale or that Coast of any engagement' and no guns had been heard.[115] In Nicholas Breton's characterisation of *The Good and The Badde*, whereas the 'worthy soldier' 'makes the Horse trample at the sound of a Trumpet', the 'untrained soldier' slept until the drums sounded.[116]

---

[112] *The Spectator*, no. 14 [Steele], 16 March 1711; In London 'Church-Bells and Tavern-Bells [were] keeping *Time* with one another' at two o'clock in the afternoon, according to the author of *Hell upon Earth; or the Town in an Uproar* (1729) facs edn, Marriage, Sex, and the Family in England, 1660-1800 (New York, 1985), p. 7.
[113] Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, p. 74.
[114] William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour; A treatise of the Saints' War against the Devil* (first published 1655-6), repr. in 2 vols (Glasgow, 1864), II, p. 399.
[115] *Evelyn*, III, p. 437 (1-2 June 1666).
[116] Nicholas Breton, *The Good and the Badde, or, Descriptions of Worthies, and Unworthies of this*

Pepys described how during the Second Dutch War, Captain Edward Grove, commander of the *Success* in the Duke of York's squadron, had 'done the basest thing' in June 1665, when he had heard the guns, but 'could not (as others) be got out, but stayed there [Lowestoft] - for which he will be tried; and is reckoned a pratling coxcombe, and of no courage.'[117]

Samuel Pepys, a man keenly aware of the significance of sound signals given his role in naval administration, occasionally admitted to being unsure about the meaning encoded in signals. In February 1660 he was perplexed by a drum being beaten in 'a strange manner of beat, now and then a single stroke.'[118] Even the simplest signals could be misheard. With parish bells at their disposal, diarists Henry Newcome, Ralph Thoresby and Samuel Pepys still managed to rise at the wrong hour. Newcome noted his fallibility in December 1661, recording in his diary that he had risen at five 'by a mistake.'[119] Ralph Thoresby thought he had risen at six in the morning on 1 November 1680, but later discovered it had been before four. He did the same thing the following day.[120] Pepys wrote pathetically about his misjudgement of time in June 1663, when he 'Lay in bed till 7 a-clock, yet rise with an opinion that it was not 5; and so continued though I heard the clock strike, till noon and could not believe that it was so late as it truly was. I was hardly ever so mistaken in my life before.'[121]

Age (London, 1616), pp. 14, 16.

[117] *Pepys*, VI, p. 130 (16 June 1665). Grove held no commission after 1665.

[118] *Pepys*, I, p. 42 (5 February 1660); see also IV, pp. 287-8 (25 August 1663); VIII, p. 311 (30 June 1667).

[119] Thomas Heywood (ed.), *The diary of the Rev. Henry Newcome, from September 30, 1661 to September 29, 1663*, The Chetham Society, old ser., 18 (Manchester, 1849), p. 38 (27 December 1661).

[120] Joseph Hunter (ed.), *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby, Author of the Topography of Leeds (1677-1724)*, 2 vols (London, 1830), I, pp. 71-2 (1-2 November 1680).

[121] *Pepys*, IV, p. 175 (6 June 1663). See also I, p. 151 (20 May 1660)

Control of the parish bells of early modern England was a complicated issue. David Cressy encapsulated the situation by describing how the ringers operated 'at the end of a chain of command, the links of which are by no means clear.'[122] Additionally, it is impossible to know how often, in what manner, and how long the bells rang, as churchwardens' accounts underrepresent their actual use and do not give details of timing, duration, or melody. What we can say with certainty is that the command of the bells was ill-defined and often *ad hoc* and depended on local and national circumstances, and on the purpose of the ringing. Adherence to rules established by national authorities depended on local pliability and enthusiasm. Despite occasional errors, misinterpretations and abuses, signals were useful, important and potentially powerful sounds. It is impossible to know how the sound of the bells was actually received, just as we cannot tell how people really felt when they heard the death watch beetle or mysterious rappings. Even when the authorities could retain control of signalling apparatus, they could not have guaranteed a desired response to their signals.

---

[122] Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, p. 56.

CHAPTER 6 - TAKE HEED OF THE WRATH OF A MIGHTY MAN, AND THE TUMULT OF THE PEOPLE: USING SOUNDS AGGRESSIVELY.

In the early modern period sounds were produced by individuals and groups in order to express their dissatisfaction with, or hostility towards, another person or group of people. This chapter describes the potent arsenal of sounds available to individuals and crowds for expressing criticism or anger. Sounds such as hissing, hallooing and hooting could communicate irritation, dissatisfaction and hatred, and could intimidate, frighten, or goad. They could indicate subversion, highlight rivalry and animosity, and advance territorial claims. These sounds could be made alone, or could accompany words and gestures. They could be made as a substitute for violence, to hint at possible physical violence, or as part of a physical attack.

Jeering laughter and hissing were used to mock, embarrass, reproach and silence others. These sounds acknowledged differences, ridiculed arrogance or gauchness, criticised shoddy performances and showed contempt for opinions. Hallooing and hooting were sounds made to tease and goad people. Shouting, 'roaring' and rattling weapons were sounds which hinted at a potential for physical aggression, and were commonly heard before fights. Once fighting commenced, witness accounts tend to concentrate on the physical action and the visual aspects of the scene, but the sounds of whip cracks, gun shots and sword clashing were occasionally remarked upon. Aggressive sounds created a charged atmosphere. As the chapter unfolds, the sounds described become increasingly overtly aggressive, culminating in a discussion of the sounds of riot and of war.

There were two key factors that determined the utility of aggressive sounds in early modern England. Firstly, the greater the numbers of people who collaborated in a soundmaking episode, the greater the effect. Sounds made to criticise or threaten would be most effective when made with unanimity by a mass

of people. Conversely, one person hissing amidst a crowd of cheerers would have had little effect. Secondly, the status of the soundmaker relative to the intended target affected the freedom to make aggressive sounds. Targets of overtly aggressive sounds were, typically, marginal or subordinate members of society. Caution was sensible when criticising or threatening powerful figures.

Neither factor provides a satisfactory basis for a discussion of aggressive sounds. Numbers involved in an incident fluctuated, as sounds might have attracted potential participants, or the situation might have become so violently charged that, fearing the consequences, some participants might have drifted away. It can also be difficult to gauge involvement; the line between participants and spectators could become blurred. Categorising incidents according to the relative status of belligerents is unsatisfactory because socially mixed groups could generate hostile sounds. Also, the status of people who were subjected to ridicule might be liminal; they might have formerly enjoyed a high profile, but had become disgraced. Aggressive sounds were not always addressed to a specific person or group, but could have been made generally, to all in earshot. Nevertheless, status is an important consideration and the theories of sociologist James C. Scott provide a useful conceptual framework. He identified the ways that subordinate groups could express their dissatisfaction with authority (including sound-based methods) without engaging in full scale revolt or rebellion. Thus, the chapter commences with an examination of seemingly innocuous sounds of covert belligerence.

Audible 'weapons of the weak'

In his study of 'everyday forms of peasant resistance', Scott observed that 'subordinate classes throughout most of history have rarely been afforded the luxury of open, organised, political activity. Or, better stated, such activity was

dangerous, if not suicidal.'[1] Scott highlighted the opportunities for subordinate members of society to engage in resistance which could not be easily detected, such as foot-dragging, lying, false compliance, feigned ignorance and pilfering, and asserted that it signals desperation when these 'stratagems are abandoned in favor of more quixotic action'.[2]

Scott's thesis is not easily substantiated by reference to historical evidence because resistance was covert, and often absent from the written record. Indeed, Scott is aware of this problem, remarking that '[e]veryday forms of resistance make no headlines.' Yet there are clues that suggest that such behaviour occurred in early modern England.[3] The way that servants might have turned a deaf ear to the ringing of their masters, detailed in Chapter 2, is an example of foot-dragging and non-compliance. Similarly, it was reported that clerks in the Crowley ironworks had been deliberately reducing the working day by heeding the fastest clock in the office to ring the end of the day and the slowest to mark the beginning. When informed, the management decreed that only the monitor's clock would be used thenceforth, and that it was not to be tampered with.[4] In his ironic advice to servants, Jonathan Swift suggested that they should exaggerate their actions when fulfilling orders, advising 'if you are so often teized to shut the Door', then slam it so hard that everything in the room rattles, to 'put your Master and Lady in Mind that you observe their Directions'. This is evidence that Swift believed that an exaggerated compliance would be one method through which servants could work within the system to resist domination. Additionally, Swift suggested that servants

---

[1] James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, 1985), p. xv.
[2] Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, p. xvi.
[3] Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, p. xvii. See also Keith Wrightson, 'The politics of the parish in early modern England', in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle (eds), *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1996), p. 12
[4] M. W. Flinn (ed.), *The Law Book of the Crowley Ironworks*, The Surtees Society, 167 (Durham, 1957), pp. 89-91, 96.

might manufacture 'accidents' in order to disrupt the peace of the household by, for example, dropping dinner plates down the stairs, as 'there is not a more agreeable sight or sound, especially if they be silver'.[5]

In a later study, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990), Scott addresses the 'hidden' nature of much of the political life of subordinate groups. He contrasts the 'transcripts' of the powerful, those representations of claims to their rule which could not be openly criticised, with the surreptitiously produced 'hidden transcripts' of subordinate groups.[6] Scott identifies moments of 'rupture' in the performance of the 'public transcript' when the 'hidden transcript' of the subordinate is momentarily revealed.[7] It is possible to detect such ruptures in early modern England. In the last chapter we saw how parishes could express criticism through bellringing at a time of political tension. During the Civil War, anti-monarchical sentiments were occasionally expressed through sounds. In a newsletter sent to Charles I in 1647 concerning the reaction to his being near London, it was stated that;

> all the Trayned Bands of London were commanded to rise on paine of death, and all the shopps to be shutt upp ... but this designe comes to nothing, for the trayned bands would not budge, not 10 men of some companies appeared, and many companies none at all but the Officers; nay the very boyes in the streets jeered the drumms as they went about with their charge upon paine of death ... most [shops] about the Exchange and Cornhill were shutt, but few in other places, and those that did shutt upp ... understanding upon what slight ground that command was and being laughed at by the others, opened their shopps againe in the afternoone ... [8]

---

[5] Jonathan Swift, *Directions to Servants* (1745), repr. C. Rawson (London, 1995), pp. 4, 41.
[6] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, 1990), pp. xii-xiii, 198.
[7] Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, p. 4.
[8] C.H. Firth (ed.), *The Clarke Papers. Selections from the paper of William Clarke, Secretary to the Council of the Army, 1647-1649, and to General Monck and the Commanders of the Army in Scotland, 1651-1660*, The Camden Society, new ser., 49 (London, 1891), pp. 132-3.

Here, not only were men ignoring the signals that they were supposed to heed, and boys mocking and scoffing at those who issued them, but shopkeepers were being shamed by ridiculing laughter.

In early modern England a variety of sounds could have been generated in order to express a disrespectful tone, such as raspberry-blowing, farting, hissing, and certain types of laughter. In his study of *Rabelais and His World* (published in English in 1984), Mikhail Bakhtin made a grand claim about the place of 'folk laughter' in medieval society, remarking that it represented 'the defeat of power, of earthly kings, of the earthly upper classes, of all that oppresses and restricts'. As laughter was 'legalized' it could not become a tool to oppress or bind people, but instead 'always remained a free weapon in their hands.'[9] It was the impulsive, transient and supposedly 'harmless' nature of laughter which allowed the powerless to deploy it freely.[10] Bakhtin's analysis is too simplistic as it assumes that such sounds were always deployed with complete freedom, but caution was needed, especially in formal settings, such as in church. Richard Bridge was presented at the end of the sixteenth century for his behaviour during a church service when he 'lewdly, contemptuously and ungodly leaned against a pillar, facing the minister, staring, laughing and scoffing at him and his sermon.'[11]

Making aggressive or critical sounds directly and overtly to a superior, or in a formal setting would have been risky. Samuel Pepys described two incidents which highlight a diplomatic control of laughter. When Sir John Mennes, Comptroller of the Navy, was acting in a manner that Pepys felt was 'childish' in

---

[9] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington, Ind., 1984), pp. 93-4.

[10] For a detailed consideration of this issue see Michael D. Bristol, *Carnival and Theater. Plebian Culture and the Structure of authority in Renaissance England* (New York, 1985), pp. 137-9.

[11] Sidney A. Peyton (ed.), *Churchwardens' Presentments in the Oxfordshire peculiars of Dorchester, Thame and Banbury,* Oxfordshire Record Society, 10 (Oxford, 1928), pp. 126-7, 161. See also Frederick George Emmison, *Elizabethan Life: morals and the Church Courts*, Essex Record Office Publications, 63 (Chelmsford, 1973), p. 119.

September 1664, he waited until Mennes was out of earshot before he 'laughed at him for it.' Three years later Pepys described how he and his friends 'laughed in scorn in [their] ... sleeves' as the Admiralty lawyer, Sir Robert Wiseman presented a case in court.[12]

Hissing was an unambiguously critical sound, requiring more care to make than laughter. As it was sometimes hard to identify the culprit amidst a mass of faces, a crowd could confer impunity to a hisser.[13] When sentiments expressed in a theatrical script displayed a political allegiance they often provoked disparaging hissing from audience members who held opposing views. Dudley Ryder noted the partisan responses elicited by passages of Dryden's *The Spanish Friar* when it was performed in 1716. 'There happened to be some reflections upon the priests which the Whigs clapped extremely and the Tories made a faint hiss.'[14] The Whig regime was facing mounting criticism at this time, but the faintness of the Tory hisses suggests timidity.

It was far more serious to display audible animosity directly at dominant political or religious figures. Abraham de la Pryme recounted the events of a visit to the theatre by William III when in Oxford in 1695. As the king was leaving some of the mob 'throng'd in, upon which the gentlemen in the gallerys hist at them'. The king misconstrued the reason for the hissing and 'thought they hiss'd at him, and took it very ill' until the intent of the hissing was made clear to him.[15] King George was clearly the object of hisses from a crowd who attended his visit to London in 1715. Ryder noted that '[a]mong the huzzas, that were very loud, I could distinguish some hisses: the fellows that dared to do that were very bad and

---

[12] *Pepys*, V, p. 278 (23 September 1664); VIII, p. 131 (26 March 1667).
[13] See Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, pp. 15, 160-2.
[14] *Dudley Ryder*, p. 181 (13 February 1716).
[15] Charles Jackson (ed.), *The Diary of Abraham de le Pryme, the Yorkshire antiquary*, The Surtees Society, 54 (Durham, 1870), p. 76 (23 December 1695).

impudent.'[16] Crowds gathered two months later to witness the burning in effigy of the Pope, the Devil and the Pretender. This anti-Catholic pageant, delayed from a fortnight earlier when it had been banned by the Lord Mayor for fear of uproar, was intended to gather support for the Hanoverian monarchy and to counter popular toryism.[17] Ryder was pleased that an overwhelming volume of sounds showed favour for the king, but his pleasure was dented when he discerned a hiss amongst the huzzas. Such displays could provide a vehicle for animosity designed to quash the spirit of loyal onlookers. In the records of the Oxford Council from 1670 it was noted that election proceedings had been hindered by 'some of the commons'. This disturbance took the form of 'hissing att Mr. Mayor and the Magistrates and the whole counsell chamber' and revealed disrespect and contempt.[18] These sounds created an atmosphere of ridicule, disrespect, and even aggression, but usually fell short of outright and punishable subversion.

An even more subtle method of expressing disrespect was to give polite but not fulsome applause. John Hervey described how theatre audiences bestowed rapturous applause upon the Prince of Orange during his visit in 1734, whilst greeting the Prince of Wales with reserved acclaim.

> Some mortification, however, he [the Prince of Wales] could not help feeling and showing in his countenance, when, upon going to the play once or twice with the Prince of Orange, the galleries when he came into the box only made a little clapping as usual with their hands, and the moment the Prince of Orange appeared the whole house rang with the peals of shouts and huzzas.[19]

---

[16] *Dudley Ryder*, p. 100 (17 September 1715).
[17] John Stevenson, *Popular disturbances in England, 1700-1870* (London, 1979), pp. 53-8; see also Rogers, 'Popular protest', p. 77.
[18] Mary G. Hobson (ed.), *Oxford Council Acts 1665-1701*, Oxford Historical Society, new ser., 2 (Oxford, 1940), pp. 43-4 (30 September 1670).
[19] John Hervey, *Some Materials Towards Memoirs of the Reign of King George II*, ed. Romney Sedgwick, 3 vols (London, 1932), I, p. 282. My thanks to Hannah Smith for this reference.

By showing approval for people in opposition to those in power, crowds could effectively criticise whilst endorsing. Parish bellringing was not the only sound to be heard when the seven bishops imprisoned for refusing to read the Declaration of Indulgence were acquitted in June 1688. Soldiers on Hounslow Heath made 'loud huzzahs for two houers together'.[20] Boswell recorded the warm reception for John Wilkes after he was released from the Tower in May 1763 where he had been held for seditious libel in *The North Briton*, the periodical he edited. A retinue of supporters gathered as he travelled to his house, where 'an immense mob ... saluted him with loud huzzas while he stood bowing from his window.'[21] Such overt displays of religious or political allegiance could demonstrate the potential power of collective approval, as expressed through sounds, and hint at the power of their collective displeasure.

The legitimacy of targets of overt criticism

Hissing was a sound commonly heard in auditoria, and common targets were those treading the boards. Thomas Dekker commented that audiences had the 'authority under the broad seale of mouldy custom to hiss or clap as they wish', but asserted that this did not give them complete control, as they 'can neither shake our *Comic Theater* with [their] stinking breath of hisses, nor raise it with the thunder-claps of [their] hands'.[22] In his characterisation of actors, Donald Lupton remarked that 'they love not the company of Geese or Serpents, because of their hissing'.[23] On occasion actors found it expedient to remove themselves from the stage when faced with a barrage of 'mews' and hisses, especially if these sounds

---

[20] Jackson (ed.), *The Diary of Abraham de la Pryme*, p. 12 (20 July 1687).
[21] *Boswell's London Journal*, p. 231 (6 May 1763).
[22] Thomas Dekker, *The Gulls Horne-Booke* (1609), repr. in George Saintsbury (ed.), *Elizabethan and Jacobean Pamphlets* (London, 1892), p. 213.
[23] Donald Lupton, *London and the Countrey Carbonadoed and Quartered into Severall Characters* (London, 1632), p. 81.

were particularly frequent, loud or spread throughout the audience.[24] In the morning before they attended a tragedy by David Mallet, Boswell and his friends decided that they would not find it worthy of merit, declaring Mallet to be 'an arrant puppy'. Boswell remarked that they were 'determined to exert ourselves in damning it', so, settled 'in the middle of the pit, and with oaken cudgels in our hands and shrill-sounding catcalls in our pockets, sat ready prepared, with a generous resentment in our breasts against dullness and impudence to be the swift masters of vengeance.' Boswell's circle and others in the audience hissed the prologue but he noted with regret that '[w]e did what we could during the first act, but found that the audience had lost their original fire and spirit and were disposed to let it pass.'[25] The criticism was insufficiently widespread for these sounds to halt the performance.

Boswell believed that theatre people were fair game for audible criticism, but disapproved when two highland officers became the target of similar rebukes when they attended an opera in 1762. Boswell was incensed when the 'mob in the upper gallery roared out, No Scots! No Scots! Out with them!', whilst hissing and pelting them with apples, asserting that this behaviour typified the 'rudeness of the English vulgar'.[26] For Boswell, hissing was only vulgar when directed at people he deemed to be inappropriate targets, and this sentiment was common throughout the early modern period. Some people were considered to be fair game for these audible rebukes. Thomas Isham detailed the derisive laughter whipped up by members of a theatre audience in July 1673 which was directed towards 'an old crone who was nicknamed after her lice, who sat there a disgrace to her sex. As

---

[24] Nathaniel Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum: or a more compleat universal etymological English dictionary than any extant* (London, 1736), s.v. 'To mew up - to shut up. ' John Baret, *An alvearie or quadruple dictionarie* (London, 1580), s.v. 'hiss, to be hissed or taunted out of the stage'. For an example of a eunuch fleeing the stage see *Pepys,* II, pp. 130-1 (2 July 1661).
[25] *Boswell's London Journal*, pp. 146-7 (19 January 1763).
[26] *ibid.*, p. 73 (8 December 1762).

soon as she was observed by the gownsmen she sent the whole Theatre into a roar of laughter.'[27] This cruel laughter highlighted the lack of esteem in which this woman was held. The wife of a Ludlow smith was similarly subjected to derision through reproachful hoots and shouts from a jeering crowd of boys when she wore clothes above her rank and walked the streets 'gentlewoman-like'. Sir William Brereton, who witnessed the scene, declared the boys' behaviour to be a just reaction to a woman who had displayed arrogant pride.[28]

Ridiculing laughter and other derisive sounds were regularly directed at outsiders and some foreign travellers to England complained of the xenophobia expressed through such sounds. Duke Frederick of Würtemberg noticed this trait on his visit to London in 1592, remarking that Londoners were apt to 'scoff and laugh' at foreign visitors.[29] Pepys suggested that this behaviour was common amongst the lower sort when he remarked on the behaviour of the crowds who gathered to see the Russian ambassador and his entourage in November 1662, and grumbled about 'the absurd nature of Englishmen that cannot forbear laughing and jeering at everything that looks strange.'[30]

While restraint was expected in front of peers or superiors, the behaviour of the wives of smiths, the performance of bad actors and the actions of foreigners were considered to be legitimate targets for ridiculing and disparaging sounds. For those considered to be immoral, special rituals of humiliation were enacted in order to express the criticism of the moral majority. These rituals are the subject of the next section.

---

[27] Norman Marlow (trans.), *The Diary of Thomas Isham of Lamport (1658-81) - 1671-3* (Farnborough, 1971), p. 221 (10 July 1673).
[28] Edward Hawkins (ed.), *Travels in Holland, the United Provinces, England, Scotland and Ireland 1634-1635, by Sir William Brereton (1604-1661)*, The Chetham Society, old ser., 1 (Manchester, 1844), p. 186.
[29] William Brenchley Rye, *England as seen by Foreigners in the days of Elizabeth and James the First* (London, 1865), p. 7.
[30] *Pepys*, III, p. 268 (27 November 1662).

Public censure of the immoral

In the medieval hue and cry and some early modern penance rituals we can investigate the ways that sounds were used to express officially sanctioned criticism or threat. Rites of public humiliation depended on the attraction of spectators, both to make the humiliation effective, and to publicise the moral lessons.

In the medieval period a 'hue and cry' was a pursuit of criminals with clamorous sounds.[31] William Blackstone described making a hue and cry as an 'old common law process of pursuing with horn and with voice all felons, and such as have dangerously wounded another'.[32] This is analogous to hunting - the miscreant was hunted and hounded until caught.[33] By the mid-sixteenth century, or shortly afterwards, this vocal and instrumental alarm was replaced with the passing of a written warrant between constabularies. It is difficult to date this transition precisely because it was gradual.[34] Francis Bacon believed that the abandonment of the vocal pursuit was responsible for a rising crime rate in the early-seventeenth century, arguing that 'now hue and cries are of no consequence, only a little paper sent up and down at a soft pace, whereas they should be prosecuted with horse and foot, and hunted as a thief'.[35] Even if the practice of hunting miscreants had

---

[31] 'Hue and Cry', the pursuit of robbers dates from the Statute of Winchester (1285), F. Pollock and F.W. Maitland, *The History of English Law Before the time of Edward I*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1911), II, p. 579 - neighbours were expected to turn out with weapons and 'besides much shouting, there will be horn-blowing; the 'hue' will be horned from vill to vill'.

[32] William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4th edn, 4 vols (Oxford, 1769-70), IV, p. 290.

[33] Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English tongues* (London, 1611), s.v. 'Hué' - 'hooted, or shouted after; exclaimed, or cryed out upon; followed with hue and cry.'

[34] Cynthia Herrup, 'New shoes and mutton pies: investigating responses to theft in seventeenth-century East Sussex', *The Historical Journal*, 27 (1984), 811-30, p. 816. In two instances of the issuing of a hue and cry from York in the 1570s suggest that the action took the form of a writ, not a chase, Angelo Raine (ed.), *York Civic Records VII,* Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 15 (Wakefield, 1950), pp. 112, 173. See also Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum*, s.v. 'Hue & Cry'.

[35] Bacon, *Works,* XIII, p. 306. It is difficult to establish exactly when this change occurred, but seems likely that it was subject to regional variation. In his description of the 'Hue & Crie' Michael Dalton provides no detail about sounds to be made Michael Dalton, *The Countrey Justice. Conteyning the practise of the Justices of the peace out of their sessions* (London, 1618), pp. 56-7;

become moribund, the meaning of the 'hue and cry' was a familiar one to early modern English people.[36]

Hounding sounds made in pursuit remained part of the penal repertoire available to the authorities. Attention was directed to scandalous persons such as adulterers or bawdy house keepers by using raucous sounds.[37] When Emma Kerkebie was found guilty of adultery in Lincoln in the mid-sixteenth century it was declared that 'the said Emma shal ride through the city and market in a cart, and be ronge out with basons.'[38] Likewise at the indictment of brothel keeper Elizabeth Holland from Pickhatch in 1597 it was judged that 'she shalbe put into a carte at Newgate and be carted with a paper on her hed shewing her offence' to Bridewell via Smithfield, Cornhill and the Cheap 'and all the waye basons to be runge before her'.[39] Twenty years later Sarah Knight and Joanna Rice received similar treatment for keeping a bawdy house in London's Rosemary Lane. These women were sentenced to be 'Carted ... staked upright w[i]thout hat or covering and to be Rung out w[i]th bells & Basons throughout all Rosemary Lane.'[40] These officially sanctioned events were designed to publicly censure licentiousness and to make noisy examples of the lewd.

Clamorous rites of humiliation and shaming were occasionally meted out by English communities without official sanction. The term 'rough music' describes the discordant sounds played upon instruments and household objects during

---

Cynthia Herrup, *The Common Peace* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 70-1.

[36] See, for example, Nashe, *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, in Nashe. *Works*, III, p. 255.

[37] E.P. Thompson, 'Rough Music' in *Customs in Common* (London, 1991), p. 478; Cotgrave, *Dictionarie*, s.v. 'charivarie de poelles'.

[38] E.P. Thomspson, *Customs in Common*, p. 478; See also London, CLRO, Letter Book N, fol. 233 'A Proclamacion for Bawdes & Scoldes' (1523). Three people found guilty of keeping a bawdy house were to be conveyed 'with Mynstralcy, Basyns and pannes Rongen afore theym' through Cheap then taken to the pillory in Cornhill with pans rung again.

[39] John Cordy Jeaffreson (ed.), *Middlesex County Records*, Middlesex County Record Society, 4 vols (London, 1886-92), I, p. 234.

[40] London, LMA, MJ/GBR/2, Gaol Delivery Register 1613-21, fol. 161v.

rituals, which are often referred to as skimmingtons, ridings or charivaris.[41] The various items used to create this din included bells, horns, fiddles, drums, bagpipes, brass kettles, guns, platters, spice mortars, candlesticks and the human voice, with laughter, 'hooting' and chanting.[42] Henry Misson described the sounds of a skimmington for a cuckold as a 'most grating Noise with Tongs, Grid-irons, Frying pans and Sauce pans.'[43]

The recipients of these noisy serenades (which were often accompanied by symbolic mocking or physical injury) were most frequently people who were believed to have flouted moral or sexual norms, such as scolding wives, quarrelling couples, sodomites or those who married a person many years their senior or junior, or even those who had failed to prevent such behaviour in their neighbours.[44] Adulterers and couples who had transgressed accepted gender roles, such as husband-beaters or cuckolded men, were particularly subjected to such censure. Although these audible manifestations of communal hostility were probably quite rare events it is likely that most early modern people would have been aware of their meaning.

By examining documented examples of the deployment of rough music it will be possible to illuminate the purpose and practice of this humiliating ritual. The first incident, described as a 'skimmington', occurred in a village in the

---

[41] Thompson, *Customs in Common*, p. 468.
[42] *ibid.*, p. 476; Martin Ingram 'Ridings, Rough Music and the "Reform of Popular Culture" in Early Modern England', *Past and Present*, 105 (1984), 79-114, pp. 87-90; the curate of Mitton was subjected to the sound of fiddles and horns and chased by people 'making a great disorderly noise', J.W. Willis Bund (ed.), *Calendar of the Quarter Sessions Papers, 1591-1643*, Worcestershire Historical Society, 11 (Worcester, 1900), p. 195; David Underdown, *Fire from Heaven; the life of an English town in the seventeenth century* (London, 1992), p. 264; Andrew Marvell 'The Last Instructions to a Painter' (written 1667) in Frank Kermode and Keith Walker (eds), *Andrew Marvell* (Oxford, 1990), p. 134; J. Gough Nichols (ed.), *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, The Camden Society, old ser., 42 (London, 1848). p. 301 (22 February 1563).
[43] Henri Misson, *Memoirs and Observations in his Travels over England. With some Account of Scotland and Ireland* (orig. publ. 1698), trans. J. Ozell (London, 1719), p. 129.
[44] Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society. Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York, 1988), pp. 49-50, 69.

seventeenth century. The second case, also from the seventeenth century, occurred in a town and was directed at a couple believed to be cohabiting illicitly. The third example, from the eighteenth century, is more unusual, and took the form of a 'mock groaning'. This was intended for a man accused of sodomy, and was conducted in his absence. In the descriptions of these episodes sound-based incidents are highlighted, and it must be stressed that references to other activities which were not sound-based are underrepresented.

The first case occurred in Quemerford, a hamlet of Calne in Wiltshire in 1618, and has been detailed by Martin Ingram. The account is based upon the depositions of Agnes and Thomas Mills, the victims of a skimmington ritual.[45] Between eight and nine in the morning a drummer from Calne arrived at Quemerford bridge accompanied by several men and boys. Thomas Mills and his landlord approached them, asked their purpose and discovering that they had come to address a skimmington, asked them to leave. Several hours later a different drummer, also from Calne, appeared and was accompanied by between three and four hundred men. One man rode atop a red horse dressed in a night cap, regaled with horns and a fake beard, and with pots hanging beneath him. Gunners fired outside the Mills' house and the sounds of pipes, horns and various bells could be discerned. Entry to the house was forced and Agnes was dragged out and beaten.

A rough music episode which occurred in 1619 in Burton-upon-Trent, has been documented by Joan Kent. William and Margaret Cripple were accused by their community of sexual cohabitation prior to marriage, and it was maintained that they had pretended to be siblings when they had moved into their house. In their defence the Cripples claimed to have been married for two years. The cacophonous assault took place on a Sunday evening in March, under the cover of darkness. Basins were rung through the town by people carrying weapons and

---

[45] Ingram, 'Ridings', esp. p. 82.

disguised townsfolk led the Cripples through the streets 'with greate noyse and with ringing of cow bells, basons, candlesticks, fryingpannes and the sounde of a drumme'. The Cripples asserted that four hundred people were present and that thirty played an active role, and that they were pelted with dirt and berated with chants of 'whore' and 'knave'.[46]

An incident described by David Rollinson as a 'mock groaning' took place in Westonbirt, a village in Gloucestershire in September 1716. George Andrews, a bailiff, was accused of committing sodomy with Walter Lingsey, a young farm worker from Gloucester.[47] Prior to rumours about this incident Andrews had been an unpopular figure in the village, and soon word of his crime had spread to neighbouring villages. A shaming ritual was orchestrated, ale brewed, meat purchased, a venue arranged, an expert called in to help, a fiddler hired and an innkeeper instructed to accompany him 'with a key and tongs in consort'. Publicity was by word of mouth and on the day of the event 'above 100 people' besides the folk of Westonbirt arrived for the festivities. Lingsey was present, but Andrews was not. Lingsey was dressed as a women and pretended to give birth to a wad of straw formed into a 'child'. This 'child' received a mock baptism and was named 'George Buggarer or Buggary'. The rector of Westonbirt described a 'greate noise' amongst those gathered upon hearing this, and then rejoicings continued. One witness remarked '[t]his being over all things were quiet, for neither George Andrews or any of his family took any notice of it.' This was not the end to the affair, as almost three years later two drunken villagers returned to

---

[46] Joan R. Kent, '"Folk Justice" and Royal Justice in early seventeenth century England: A "Charivari" in the Midlands', *Midland History*, 8 (1983), 70-85; esp. pp. 71-3. Martin Ingram warns that Joan Kent's interpretation over-stresses the 'Folk Justice' nature of this incident, pointing out that a key player was a constable of Burton, and suggests that it could have been 'urban customary justice' out of control, 'Juridical Folklore in England Illustrated by Rough Music', in Christopher Brooks and Michael Lobban (eds), *Communities and Courts in Britain, 1150-1900*, pp. 72-4.

[47] David Rollinson, 'Property, Ideology and Popular Culture in a Gloucester Village, 1660-1740', *Past and Present*, 93 (1981), 70-97, *passim*.

Westonbirt at night and pretended to be lost when they reached 'the Longmead' where Andrews kept his cattle. Here 'they made a great howling like dogs and sometimes roaring like bulls in such strange & terrible mannour that very much frighted and disorder'd the cattle.' When Andrews asked the meaning of this outcry he was attacked by one of the men. As Andrews had not been present for the highly organised mock groaning, it is possible that these locals believed that he should be subjected to a more spontaneous rough music episode.

Robert Shoemaker acknowledges that charivari-style incidents were rare in London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but opines that the events described when mobs and tumults were raised 'about' people in their homes or in the streets shared the same motivations, they expressed disapproval for a violation of accepted social or sexual norms.[48] A form of rough music was created with handclapping and shouting. One woman was bound over in 1664 for pursuing another 'in the streets clapping her hands and crying out whore whore whore thereby raising a great tumult of rude people to the endangering of her life.' In some instances the motivation for such behaviour is unclear. John Gough and John Hopcroft were bound over in March 1721 for 'greatly Insulting & abusing' Mary Banescote on more than one occasion by 'raising Great Riotts & Tumultes about Her so often disturbing Her she cannot go quietly about her Business.'[49] Riots and tumults might also be raised outside business premises and would have been directed against unfair trading.[50] Attention was drawn to individuals at the centre of these noisy affairs; their sexuality slandered or their business ethics discredited.

---

[48] Robert B. Shoemaker, 'The London "Mob" in the Early Eighteenth Century', *Journal of British Studies*, 26 (1987), 273-304, p. 291. See also table 2, p. 283.
[49] London, LMA, MJ/SR/2363, recs 63-4
[50] Shoemaker, 'The London "Mob"', p. 291; London, LMA, MJ/SR/1289 rec. 43; MJ/SR/2325 [Westminster] rec. 25; MJ/SR/2369 rec. 201; MJ/SR/2343 [Westminster] rec. 99 April 1720; MJ/SR/2396 [Westminster] recs 34-5, 78.

Many of these cases share characteristics with officially sanctioned public penance rituals.[51] Sounds were used to advertise events and to gather a braying crowd. The sounds of ringing basins and bells, the banging of drums and pans and the shooting of guns attracted a multitude of people. The Mills estimated spectators to number between three and four hundred, the Cripples suggested four hundred attended, and hundreds were present for the mock-groaning. Although these figures might be an overestimation, as the warlike aggression and great noise may have led witnesses to exaggerate the numbers involved, it is obvious that large numbers of people flocked to witness such spectacles.

Without crowds there would have been no humiliation and no example could have been set. The impact of ridicule depended on the humiliating and harsh laughter of the spectators. The organisers and perpetrators of these activities were aware of this and advertised the events through sounds. These ceremonies of justice demanded that those guilty of immorality should be laughed at by moral spectators. Martin Ingram believes that laughter was central to all charivari rituals, and was most commonly a manifestation of hostile derision.[52] According to Elizabeth Foyster this laughter was a 'mere by-product' of these rituals, but this undervalues the role that laughter actually played.[53] Laughter would have been heard at all such events and was a vital determinant of the efficacy of the ritual. There were really two phases of laughter; the first being the initial reactions to the misdemeanour, for instance the sniggering behind the cuckold's back. These sniggers and whispers caused by rumours would have been both cause and symptom of the ostracism. As the sniggering and whispering became more widespread the community would have felt a pressure to express their disapproval

---

[51] Ingram 'Ridings', p. 92; Shoemaker, 'The London "Mob"', pp. 287-8.
[52] Ingram 'Ridings', p. 82; see also p. 87; E.P. Thompson, 'Rough Music', p. 469.
[53] Elizabeth Foyster, 'A Laughing Matter? Marital Discord and Gender Control in Seventeenth Century England', *Rural History*, 4 (1993), 5-22; p. 6.

more explicitly. The second bout of laughter was in response to the humiliating ritual itself. Laughter was both a reaction to, and the cause of, humiliation. The derisive sounds of the ritual would have acted as an *aid memoire*, for participants and spectators alike.[54]

Rough music was a versatile tool. Neither gender nor misdemeanour specific, it could be used to hint, to warn and to drive away. These episodes could occur during day or night, with or without warning. The events could be carefully orchestrated over a period of several weeks, as was the Westonbirt groaning, or be spontaneous, hastily convened affairs fuelled by alcohol, such as the Westonbirt follow-up attack. Sounds advertised the event, created an intimidating atmosphere and put across the message from the community in an unforgettable manner.

The sounds of unruly gangs

Some sounds were not necessarily made to frighten hearers, but many hearers would have been frightened nonetheless. Spontaneous incidents, which might be caused by 'youthful high spirits', created consternation amongst citizens. If apprehended, gangs of unruly young men who menaced the streets at night might have been bound over to keep the peace, but it was likely that most rowdy behaviour was overlooked, ignored or endured.[55] When disagreement over the score in a game became acrimonious and fighting ensued, fear might spread amongst those in the immediate vicinity. As part of a programme to train poor children, boys were apprenticed to 'arts masters' (craftsmen) in Bridewell Hospital. These apprentices occasionally caused mayhem in the area. In June 1620 the court of the London Bridewell heard the statements of Mr Lea and Mr Evans, both of Blackfriars, concerning 'an uproare' allegedly committed by the constable and

---

[54] Thompson, 'Rough Music', p. 488.
[55] Ian Brownlie, *The Law Relating to Public Order* (London, 1968), p. 4; Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority. Formative Experiences in England 1560-1640* (Oxford, 1996), p. 167.

some parishioners of St Martin's, which involved the Bridewell apprentices. They claimed that several Bridewell boys were struck down and violently pursued by the constable. The boys involved claimed that they had been challenged by the men of St Martin's to play cudgels but had fallen out with them near the constable's house, angering the occupant, who gave chase.[56] A committee was established in the early-eighteenth century to investigate the unruly behaviour of Bridewell apprentices and the minutes of their meetings indicate the types of sounds which might have been encountered near Blackfriars when these boys were at large. In September 1710 a body of about thirty apprentices 'made a tumult & knock'd down several persons' in Cheapside.[57]

Although it was difficult to prevent spontaneous outbursts, attempts were made to reduce their occurrence and to mitigate the impact of violent activity. The behaviour of apprentices and servants, those thought most likely to participate in such events, was regulated, especially on holidays and at night.[58] Limits were placed on permitted Shrovetide activities in 1578 when the authorities decreed that householders should prevent their servants and apprentices from creating 'unconveneyent multitudes' or making

> anye showtinge, hooping noyses, sounding of drumes or instruments, shootinge of gunnes or usinge of squibbes other then shalbe fytt for quyet and sober persones modestlye and dyscretlye usinge their tyme of honest recreation.[59]

In 1615 London householders were instructed by the Common Council to prevent apprentices and children from trooping, training and drumming in the streets.[60] The rule of curfew imposed by the Merchant Adventurers on their apprentices after

---

[56] London, GL, Bridewell Court Books (B.C.B.) 6, 1617-26, fols 189r-v; See Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, pp. 138-40 for nuisances caused by unruly game playing.
[57] London, CLRO, Misc Mss -58/35, 'Committee investigating nuisances committed by Bridewell Boys in early 18th century'.
[58] Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, pp. 78, 147-9, 167.
[59] London, CLRO, Jour. 20 (2), fol. 388.
[60] Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, p. 167.

1608 explicitly forbade them to 'knock or ring at men's doors or beat at windows.'[61] The Bridewell Court heard on 7 May 1634 that several Bridewell boys had marched in a disorderly manner through the streets of London with a 'drum striking before them' on the previous May Day, for which behaviour they received warnings.[62] As a result of the misdemeanours committed on the 5th November 1715 by the Bridewell boys it was ordered that the apprentices should be kept in on holy days and have the following day free instead. In July 1716 it was decreed that boys earmarked as ringleaders of 'ryott or tumult' were to be 'stripp't corrected & turned out of the House'.[63]

Some of the sounds these gangs made would have induced fear in timorous folk. The potential for violence implied by such sounds could have frightened those exposed to them. It was claimed that noisy fighting between the men of St Martin's and the Bridewell apprentices put a pregnant women 'into a great affright to the great indangering of her health.'[64] Darkness would doubtless have exacerbated such fears, causing listeners to exaggerate the potential danger or proximity of such groups.

Some counselled against making scoffing and reproachful sounds on the grounds that the 'ill blood' bred by them might escalate into actual violence, but for some this was clearly the intention.[65] Articles of misdemeanour were recorded against three men from Haghley, who 'went to the top of a hill [in Old Swinford] there adjoining and hooted and shouted and called for the cowardly boys of Old

---

[61] Olive Jocelyn Dunlop and Richard D. Denman, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour, a History* (London,1912), p. 189; Steven R. Smith, 'The London apprentices as seventeenth-century adolescents', *Past and Present*, 61 (1973), 149-61.
[62] London, GL, B.C.B. 7, (1627-34), fol. 377v (7 May 1634).
[63] London, CLRO, Misc. Mss -58/35, 'Informations ab[out] Bridewell boys taken 11 Nove.1715'
[64] London, GL, B.C.B. 6, fols 189r-v (June 1620).
[65] *Good Manners for Schools or Aparaphrase upon Qui mihi etc.*, trans. Oswald Dykes (1700); Hugh Rhodes, *Boke of nurture, or scholle of good maners* (1577), repr. in *The Babees Book*, p. 65.

Swinford to come forth to them.'[66] In this case sounds were deliberately produced in order to goad others to engage in violent confrontation.

When the sounds of weapons were used to intimidate or goad they might have implied that the weapons could be turned upon the auditors, causing them physical harm. William Godfree and William Berrowe were indicted in 1614 for entering the close of Francis Wheeler at Bushley in Worcestershire and terrorising him by discharging a gun.[67] Yet, an assailant did not need to shoot a gun for its potential for damage to be implied. In the case against Humphrey Angier for robberies heard in the Old Bailey in 1723, a city marshall claimed that he had been intimidated by Angier and his colleagues when they 'rattled their Pistols very much' about him.[68] On 5th November 1715, the 'Gunpowder plot day', witnesses described the sounds which alerted them to the mischief caused by Bridewell boys who had escaped at night by blowing up a padlock with gunpowder.[69] Isaac Cox, an oilman from Walbrook, heard the boys sometime after ten o'clock, at Fleet Bridge when they were 'knocking ag[ainst] the windows.' William Bennet also described the scenes he witnessed that night, remarking that the boys were 'beating ag[ainst] the doors going towards Bridewell' with 'staves & clubs & large sticks.' William Lin, a linen draper from Cheapside, affirmed how the 'mob' beat against windows and doors. William Steward, in Bow Lane at the time of the incident, heard the boys 'hitting with sticks' and hallowing as they travelled towards the conduit.[70] In addition to the obvious aggression in the activities of these gangs of men, their behaviour might also be regarded as an attempt to seize territory, at

---

[66] Willis Bund (ed.), *Calendar of Worcestershire Quarter Sessions Papers,* p. 23.
[67] *ibid.*, p. 195; see also Charlotte Charke, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs Charlotte Charke, youngest daughter of Colley Cibber ... written by Herself* (London, 1755), pp. 45-56.
[68] *Select Trials at the Sessions House in the Old Bailey for murder, robbery, rapes, sodomy, coining, frauds, bigamy, and other offences* (1742), facs edn, Marriage, Sex and the Family in England 1660-1800, 21, 4 vols (New York, 1985), II, p. 2.
[69] M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1930), p. 253.
[70] London, CLRO, Misc. Mss -58/35, 'Information ab[out] Bridewell boys taken 11 Nove 1715'.

least symbolically, but also literally because many people might not have dared to walk the streets when such gangs were at large. This territorial aspect of aggressive sounds will be the focus of the next section.

Territorial sounds

Making a loud or raucous sound could have been an act of aggression or an assertion of dominance.[71] By making sounds which obscured the words of others, or which prevented people from participating in certain activities, a person could momentarily exert territorial dominance. The sounds made by Boswell and his clique in the pit would have registered their dissatisfaction with the play, but might also have annoyed other members of the audience who wished to hear. In his ironic advice to the 'gull', Dekker explained how one could maximise irritation caused to other audience members by sitting on the stage and making loud sounds;

> take up the rush, and tickle the earnest eares of your fellow gallants, to make other fooles fall a laughing: mewe at passionate speeches, blare at merrie, finde fault with the musicke, whew at the childrens Action, whistle at the songs ...[72]

A letter in *The Spectator* complained about people who attended 'publick meetings' and theatrical performances but whose intention was to 'draw off the Attention of the spectators from the Entertainment, and to fit it upon themselves'. These characters whispered or laughed together, 'and by their Noise and Gestures show they have no Respect for the rest of the Company.' The author called for increased entry charges for those who notoriously disturbed theatre audiences.[73] Another letter in *The Spectator* made the connection between such inconsiderate sounds and trespass explicit when its author complained of 'Whistlers, Singers and Common Orators', who, when in public places 'are heard further than their Portion

---

[71] Diane Ackerman, *A Natural History of the Senses* (London, 1990), p. 187.
[72] Dekker, *The Gulls Horne-Booke*, pp. 260-4.
[73] *The Spectator*, no. 168 [Steele] 12 September 1711.

of the Room', describing these people as 'Trespassers', and asserted that there 'is no Authority for him [a rich young man] to go whistle where he pleases.'[74]

From the early 1600s, and probably before, London's citizens were occasionally terrorised at night by men organised into gangs, including those going by the names of: the Muns, the Hectors, the Dead Boys, the Roaring Boys, the Tityre-tues, and the Bugles. These men made sport of fighting with pedestrians, attacking the watch, shouting, breaking windows and various other noisy and aggressive acts.[75] Together with friends, Sir Christopher Smash, a character in Thomas Shadwell's *The Woman Captain*, pulls off door knockers, paints signs black and fights with the watch, accompanied by street musicians who are forced to play. In the second act these men keep the inhabitants of Covent Garden awake all night with the noise of breaking windows and fighting.[76] Participants in these activities were occasionally apprehended. John Wymmes, a gentleman, was bound over to keep the peace in 1613 for causing an unspecified 'affray' in the street at night. In 1615 a group of gentlemen who had been apprehended by the constables and watch at midnight were indicted for their riotous and unlawful assembly. These men had broken windows with stones, alarming and disquieting the neighbourhood. In the same year John Wright, a gentleman from Chester, was bound over for causing a great misdemeanor at night and for raising a tumult in the streets.[77]

---

[74] *The Spectator*, no. 145 [Steele] 16 August 1711.
[75] Geoffrey Pearson, *Hooligan. A History of Respectable Fears* (Basingstoke, 1983), p. 188; L.C. Jones, *The Clubs of the Georgian Rakes* (New York, 1942), p. 14; Thornton S. Graves, 'Some Pre-Mohock Clansmen', *Studies in Philology*, 20 (1923), 395-421, p. 399.
[76] Cited in Graves, 'Some pre-Mohock clansmen', pp. 418-19; see also *The Character of a Town-Gallant; Exposing The Extravagant Fopperies of some vain Self-conceited Pretenders to Gentility and good Breeding* (1675) repr. in Charles Hindley (ed.), *The Old Book Collector's Miscellany: Or, a Collection of Readable Prints of Literary Rarities*, 3 vols (London, 1871-3), II.
[77] London, LMA, MJ/SR/526, recs 195-6, MJ/SR/542, recs 14-15, 132, 175; MJ/SR/546 recs 41, 78; MJ/SBR/2 fols 22, 224, 238, 252, 265.

A historian of these groups describes their members as 'hard-drinking well-to-do young men with no responsibilities, but with influence in high places, and an upper-class callousness to the rights of others.'[78] From the perspective of the participants, making loud sounds could have been a way of broadcasting their youthful vigour and demonstrably having fun. For most citizens losing sleep would have been the biggest threat posed by these activities. John Gay described the revelling rakes as 'Kindlers of riots, enemies of Sleep'.[79] In the particular case of the rampaging groups of young gentlemen it is plausible to suggest that part of the motivation behind their noise was to emphasise their lack of need for sleep during the night hours. Unmarried men with few responsibilities would not need to retire early. Their nocturnal sound displayed an arrogant disregard for this need in others.[80]

These groups were comprised mostly of unmarried wealthy men, but groups of lower class men also imitated their behaviour. In mimicry of the behaviour of the scholars, and especially of the Proctor's watch, Cambridge men were reported to have strutted about the streets wearing gowns and shouting 'as yf they had counterfett broken lattin'. Another group of townsmen broke windows and made 'a great hodiloghe & noyse & hoopeinge & hallowinge with singeinge of badd songes'. After studying such cases Alexandra Shepard argued that this behaviour was both a form of territorial assertion and an appropriation of the regulatory character of official disciplinary bodies.[81] These noisy displays of dominance were intimately bound up with issues of honour and territory.

---

78 Jones, *The Clubs of the Georgian Rakes*, pp. 11, 15.
79 John Gay, *Trivia, Or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London*, 2nd edn (London, 1720), III, line 322.
80 See Alexandra Shepard, 'Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England, with special reference to Cambridge, c. 1560-1640' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge, 1998), pp. 153-4.
81 See Shepard, 'Meanings of Manhood', pp. 164-6.

Intimidation by groups of young men did not only occur in public places. On 26th August 1600 a party of young gentlemen headed by William Eure demanded hospitality from Sir Thomas Posthumous Hoby at his house in Hackness near Scarborough.[82] The men became increasingly drunk as the evening progressed and Hoby described their behaviour as a 'riotous assault'.[83] Servant Robert Nettleton provided a witness statement in which he testified to the events of the night. When the household was at prayers in the hall;

> three of the guests' servants came and stood in the hall, laughing and making of a noise during the whole time of prayers. In the chamber above them the guests also made a noise, and some, coming out to the stairs that led down into the hall, made a noise with singing of strange tunes which, he was sure, were not psalms.[84]

Hoby was a staunch Protestant who came to dwell amongst a Yorkshire elite who were wedded to Catholicism. The Eure family were a well established family and were principal figures in the local society.[85] Hoby described the sounds made by the guests from above the hall as 'an extraordinary noise with their feet' and noted that these sounds commenced as the household began to sing a psalm. This scoffing in the time of prayers, accompanied by references to sports, the playing of cards and the excessive consumption of alcohol enjoyed by the guests, was presumably an attempt to mock Hoby's faith. Hoby and his wife endured a similar rumpus the following morning when their guests (who were still imbibing alcohol) 'made a great noise in the great chamber with hallowing and shouting, and, my lady's chamber being very near'.[86] Nettleton added that Hoby asked his guests to quieten 'for that they did disease my lady'. At this point Eure and his company

---

[82] 'The Evidence of Robert Nettleton' transcr. in Joanna Moody (ed.), *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady. The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599-1605* (Stroud, 1998), pp. 243-5.
[83] Statement written 5 September 1600 in a letter by Sir Hoby written to Sir Robert Cecil, in Moody (ed.), *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady*, p. 240.
[84] *ibid.*, pp. 243-4.
[85] Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1990), p. 13
[86] Moody (ed.), *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady*, p. 244.

suggested that they came especially to see Margaret and implied that she was guilty of making her husband a cuckold by threatening to place horns at his gate.[87]

Eure and his companions were clearly trying to assert control. They were acting in a territorial fashion, exploiting the rules of hospitality to gain entrance to the Hoby household, and then embarking on a noisy display of dominance. The incident was both threatening and chaotic. There are clear charivari-style elements to the invasion, both in the symbolic references and with the discordant sounds. The noises made at prayer time mocked the Hobys' faith and marred the service.

By drowning out the words or sounds of others, people could assert their dominance. This was especially poignant when the final speeches of the condemned were obliterated, as it denied them a final justification, or expiation. When taken with the other regicides to Tyburn in April 1662, Miles Corbet was prevented from reading his final words 'by the shouting and pushing and mud slinging crowds'. In a more officially sanctioned manner, trumpets were used to drown out the last words of condemned traitor Sir Henry Vane.[88]

Attempts to dominate physical or moral territory through sounds were fairly frequent features in early modern society. The sounds made by large groups of people, united together to score political points, or to seize the territory of others, could be extremely violent. The sounds of war and riot are the focus of the next section.

---

[87] Unfortunately Margaret wrote her personal diary in a dry style and gives little indication of her reaction to this incident. *ibid.*, p. 108 (26 August 1600).

[88] M. Exwood and H.L. Lehmann (eds and trans.), *The Journal of William Schellinks' Travels in England 1661-1663*, The Camden Society, 5th Ser., 1 (London, 1993), p. 82 (29 April 1662); *Pepys*, III, p. 108 (14 June 1662).

Riot and war

William Lambard classified riot, rout and other unlawful assemblies as breaches of the peace with a multitude.[89] Riot was defined as a group of three of more people who assembled 'to the intent to do any unlawful act, with force or violence'.[90] Riots were often directed against figures of authority and Joseph Kynnett was bound over in May 1620 to answer for 'molesting & disturbinge the Inhabitants at 3 of the clock in the morninge he with others knockinge at their doores, and for abuseinge the officers of Wt.crostreet.'[91] A century later a mutinous watchman, Joseph Gross, had encouraged other members of the watch to intimidate the Westminster burgesses by walking the streets 'in a Body, and in a very Riotous manner to knock at the Doors of divers of the Members of the Court in a very particular and loud manner to the great disturbance of the Public peace'.[92] The burgesses were the target of this violence, but the riot was considered as a threat to the whole community.

In rioting some sounds were the by-product of acts intended to damage persons or property. Contemporary accounts of early modern riots described their warlike sounds. Some mentioned that participants were organised with military instruments, others noted sounds of cries, breaking windows and clashing weapons. The attention of fearful earwitnesses and potential participants alike would have been drawn to the incidents by sound. The riots discussed below have not been selected for their representitiveness but because their documentation includes rich earwitness evidence which details the use of sounds in the context of activities described as riotous or tumultuous.

---

[89] William Lambard, *Eirenarcha or of the office of the justices of peace* (London, 1581), pp. 182-3, Lambard recgonised the French root of the word riot, 'to braule, or scolde, for commonly Riottes in deede do follow of brauling in worde' (p. 175).
[90] Dalton, *The Countrey Justice*, pp. 191-6.
[91] London, LMA, MJ/SR/598 recs. 56-8.
[92] William Henry Manchée (ed.), *The Westminster City Fathers, the Burgess Court of Westminster, 1585-1901* (London, 1924), p. 47 (6 July 1727).

Some leaders of the 'Western Rising' enclosure riots of 1626-1632 adopted the name 'Lady Skimmington'.[93] These riots occurred in the Royal Forests of Gloucestershire, Dorset and Wiltshire and were provoked by deforestation and enclosure.[94] A crowd, estimated to number five-hundred, was involved in the destruction of enclosures on 25 March 1631. These people, many of whom were armed, 'did with two drummes, two coulers and one fife in a warlike and outragious manner assemble themselves together'.[95] In woods near Bicknor rioters attempted to pull down fences erected by Sir Giles Mompesson, an agent of Lady Villiers, and 'by sound of drum and ensigns in a most rebellious manner, carrying a picture or statue apparelled like Mompesson and with great noise and clamour threw it into the coalpits which the said Sir Giles had digged.' A crowd also assembled outside the house of another of Villiers' agents and there 'made an Oyes' to command silence before issuing demands.[96] On 5 April a crowd estimated at three thousand gathered with drums and banner and felled enclosures in other parts of the forest.[97] In addition to the use of the name 'Lady Skimmington' and the ritualistic shaming of the Mompesson figure to derisive sounds, a most striking feature of these episodes is the adoption of military and civic sounds; the drums, fifes and 'Oyes' used to organise and silence.[98] This was no novel development. In London riots of Towerstreet ward in 1595 when the ire of the crowd was directed against the Lord Mayor, those gathered 'hartened thereunto [Tower Hill] by sounding of a trumpet... the trumpetter having bene a

---

[93] Buchanan Sharp, *In Contempt of all Authority. Rural Artisans and Riot in the West of England. 1586-1660* (London, 1980), p. 2.
[94] D. G. C. Allan, 'The Rising in the West, 1628-1631', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 5 (1952), 76-85, p. 76; Sharp, *In Contempt*, p. 3.
[95] Sharp, *In Contempt*, p. 95.
[96] Allan, 'The Rising in the West', p. 81; Ingram, 'Ridings', p. 91.
[97] Sharp, *In Contempt*, p. 96.
[98] for other uses of military instruments during riots see R. B. Manning, *Village Revolts. Social Protest and Popular Disturbances in England 1509-1640* (Oxford, 1988), p. 83.

soldier.'[99] Similarly, in a case of fenland rioting heard in Star Chamber in the seventeenth century it was reported that the participants 'had a signall to assemble themselves by sometymes by a bell, sometymes by an horne'.[100] Such sounds would have been afforded instant recognition; participants knew what these signals meant, and so assisted riot leaders in their organisation of participants.

In a close study of one angry incident I will illuminate many of the points raised in this chapter, and also demonstrate the development of aggressive sounds during an incident. The event occured during the night of 23 July 1723, a month after the declaration of the election of tory Sir John Williams as alderman for the Cripplegate Ward and on the day that the Court of London Aldermen had called Williams to be sworn into office. The election had been acrimonious, with whig sympathiser Felix Feast accusing Williams of corrupt campaigning and of intimidating his scrutineers.[101] On the day of the riot the Court of Aldermen had declared that although Williams had been guilty of menacing Feast's scrutineers this had not affected the scrutiny and that Williams had therefore been elected fairly.[102] This election was the first held in the ward which was governed by an act of 1714 giving the inhabitants of each ward the right to chose their own alderman, replacing the old method of presenting several names from whom the lord mayor and aldermen would select one.[103] Those accused of orchestrating the riot were presumably celebrating Williams' swearing in. It is impossible to reconstruct the actual events of this night as much of the evidence is contradictory, but it will be useful to extract some of the features which detail the motivation to create sounds

---

[99] Manning, *Village Revolts*, p. 210; see also p. 218
[100] Samuel Rawson Gardiner (ed.), *Reports of Cases in the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission*, The Camden Society, new ser., 39 (London, 1886), p. 60.
[101] Nicholas Rogers, *Whigs and Cities. Popular Politics in the Age of Walpole and Pitt* (Oxford, 1989), p. 36; London, CLRO, Rep. 127, fols 370, 394, 402, 416; John James Baddeley, *The Aldermen of Cripplegate Ward from A.D. 1276 to A.D. 1900* (London, 1900), p. 88.
[102] London, CLRO, Rep. 127, fol. 416.
[103] Baddeley, *The Aldermen of Cripplegate*, p. 87.

and the perceptions of these sounds.[104] It must be stressed that the event was one which worked on many levels and was perceived by the participants with more than one sense. For different people the sounds would have triggered different emotions.

Descriptions provided by both witnesses for the prosecution and those for the defence suggest the following sequence of events. The house of David Jones was attacked between six and seven o'clock in the evening. Jones had worked as a scrutineer on Feast's behalf. During the following hour men were seen marching outside the Crown Coffee House, two doors away from Jones' property.[105] At about eight o'clock two bonfires were lit, on either side of Cripplegate. Members of the trained bands who had been exercising that day at the artillery ground were dining at the Crown Tavern (above the Coffee House) and heard a commotion outside. By half-past-nine one of the bonfires had been extinguished. Witnesses for the prosecution suggested it burnt itself out, but witnesses for the defence claimed that it had been kicked out by the soldiers. At this point a constable approached one of the bonfires and attempted to read the Hanoverian proclamation (the 'Riot Act') to disperse those assembled but was prevented from completing it. The sounds of hissing and hallooing were heard outside the Crown Tavern between nine and ten o'clock and the men then retreated to the bonfire, probably to reassemble and relight it. After ten o'clock the 'mob' returned to the Crown Tavern in greater numbers, hissed and retreated again. They returned for a third time at half-past-ten, this time breaking windows and lamps. Just before eleven o'clock the the 'bonfire people' pursued the constable and soldiers, who came to read the r iot act again, back to the tavern door, where a violent struggle ensued.

---

[104] Details of the riot are taken from *Select Trials at the Old Bailey,* II, pp. 39-53.
[105] H. Harben, *A Dictionary of London* (London, 1918), p. 184, in the sixteenth century the 'Crown' was 'a messuage & brewhouse' in Redcross Street (without Cripplegate). The Coffee House was used for masonic meetings between 1723-1755, according to Bryant Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses* (London, 1963), p. 180.

and the perceptions of these sounds.[104] It must be stressed that the event was one which worked on many levels and was perceived by the participants with more than one sense. For different people the sounds would have triggered different emotions.

Descriptions provided by both witnesses for the prosecution and those for the defence suggest the following sequence of events. The house of David Jones was attacked between six and seven o'clock in the evening. Jones had worked as a scrutineer on Feast's behalf. During the following hour men were seen marching outside the Crown Coffee House, two doors away from Jones' property.[105] At about eight o'clock two bonfires were lit, on either side of Cripplegate. Members of the trained bands who had been exercising that day at the artillery ground were dining at the Crown Tavern (above the Coffee House) and heard a commotion outside. By half-past-nine one of the bonfires had been extinguished. Witnesses for the prosecution suggested it burnt itself out, but witnesses for the defence claimed that it had been kicked out by the soldiers. At this point a constable approached one of the bonfires and attempted to read the Hanoverian proclamation (the 'Riot Act') to disperse those assembled but was prevented from completing it. The sounds of hissing and hallooing were heard outside the Crown Tavern between nine and ten o'clock and the men then retreated to the bonfire, probably to reassemble and relight it. After ten o'clock the 'mob' returned to the Crown Tavern in greater numbers, hissed and retreated again. They returned for a third time at half-past-ten, this time breaking windows and lamps. Just before eleven o'clock the the 'bonfire people' pursued the constable and soldiers, who came to read the r iot act again, back to the tavern door, where a violent struggle ensued.

---

104 Details of the riot are taken from *Select Trials at the Old Bailey,* II, pp. 39-53.
105 H. Harben, *A Dictionary of London* (London, 1918), p. 184, in the sixteenth century the 'Crown' was 'a messuage & brewhouse' in Redcross Street (without Cripplegate). The Coffee House was used for masonic meetings between 1723-1755, according to Bryant Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses* (London, 1963), p. 180.

and the perceptions of these sounds.[104] It must be stressed that the event was one which worked on many levels and was perceived by the participants with more than one sense. For different people the sounds would have triggered different emotions.

Descriptions provided by both witnesses for the prosecution and those for the defence suggest the following sequence of events. The house of David Jones was attacked between six and seven o'clock in the evening. Jones had worked as a scrutineer on Feast's behalf. During the following hour men were seen marching outside the Crown Coffee House, two doors away from Jones' property.[105] At about eight o'clock two bonfires were lit, on either side of Cripplegate. Members of the trained bands who had been exercising that day at the artillery ground were dining at the Crown Tavern (above the Coffee House) and heard a commotion outside. By half-past-nine one of the bonfires had been extinguished. Witnesses for the prosecution suggested it burnt itself out, but witnesses for the defence claimed that it had been kicked out by the soldiers. At this point a constable approached one of the bonfires and attempted to read the Hanoverian proclamation (the 'Riot Act') to disperse those assembled but was prevented from completing it. The sounds of hissing and hallooing were heard outside the Crown Tavern between nine and ten o'clock and the men then retreated to the bonfire, probably to reassemble and relight it. After ten o'clock the 'mob' returned to the Crown Tavern in greater numbers, hissed and retreated again. They returned for a third time at half-past-ten, this time breaking windows and lamps. Just before eleven o'clock the the 'bonfire people' pursued the constable and soldiers, who came to read the r iot act again, back to the tavern door, where a violent struggle ensued.

---

[104] Details of the riot are taken from *Select Trials at the Old Bailey,* II, pp. 39-53.
[105] H. Harben, *A Dictionary of London* (London, 1918), p. 184, in the sixteenth century the 'Crown' was 'a messuage & brewhouse' in Redcross Street (without Cripplegate). The Coffee House was used for masonic meetings between 1723-1755, according to Bryant Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses* (London, 1963), p. 180.

The following December John Lant was identified as the ringleader and fined thirty pounds.[106]

The description of events by witnesses diverge according to the role that they ascribe to sounds. Prosecution witnesses emphasise sounds while the defence witnesses minimise them. The interpretation of the event for the purposes of determining blame clearly depended on the belligerance of the protagonists as manifested through the sounds they made. One detail contained in statements of witnesses for the prosecution, and absent from statements of witnesses for the defence, is the consideration given to sounds made by the people who initially gathered by the bonfires. One witness for the prosecution, John Bates, heard from his house at about seven o'clock 'a great Noise and Hollowing near Cripplegate'. Hearing this prompted him to look for the source of the commotion, which he decided was coming from a group of twenty men near Jones' house. These men were 'making a great hissing, and shaking and rattling their Clubs.' Joseph Lamb, one of the soldiers, stated that he and his fellow diners had heard, but not seen, the attack on Jones' house. Major Adams, 'Master of the Crown-Tavern', recalled hearing 'a very great Noise of hissing and hallooing', but believed no damage had been done. Samuel Lawrence, a constable who watched from near the Crown Coffee House heard as 'the Mob began to holloe, and gather about the Door.' Another constable timed the breaking of windows and lamps to be twenty-five past ten, when 'there was such a terrible Racket at the Tavern Door' and hurrying to the door he saw the destruction.

Few of the witnesses for the defence mentioned sounds made by the people who danced around the bonfires or gathered outside the houses. Indeed, many portrayed these activities as peaceful, and one stated that about 'twenty or thirty went around the Fire very quietly.' In statements from witnesses for the defence

---

[106] London, CLRO, Rep. 127, fols 416-7.

there is a much greater stress upon visual aspects of the disturbance. A man called 'Worsely' claimed he 'saw no Disturbance' until almost nine o'clock. Mr Kelpin also stated that the men near both fires made 'no Disturbance', and remarked that he had 'heard no manner of Uproar but at the Crown Tavern, nor did I see that the Mob went thither'. Kelpin lived in a house over Cripplegate and stated that he had seen the activities from his window. Although it would seem plausible that some sounds made by the men had attracted his attention and prompted him to investigate the scene, he did not make this connection in his statement. Mrs Brown, also for the defence, stated that she 'saw the Affair from the Beginning to the End.' The only sound that she recalled was a gun shot issued by the soldiers. The entire account of the event provided by Joseph Jude, also for the defence, is sight-based and does not mention any form of audible activity. The only defence witness who mentioned sounds made by Williams' supporters referred to hallooing, which, in the early modern period, could be both aggressive and celebratory.

The crucial distinction to make in order to attribute guilt was the point at which the gathering turned violent. The accounts of the defence witnesses suggest that the occasion was initially festive, and only degenerated into violence with the involvement of the soldiers. When the soldiers in the tavern came out, one witness claimed that several of them were drunk and violent, and another that they had kicked out the bonfire. The sounds described suggest that these people might, as part of their celebration, have wished to attract attention, to rub in the humiliation of defeat for the whig supporting candidate. At some point menace substituted triumphalism, either in the minds of the aggressors, or their targets, or both. While the witnesses for the prosecution claimed that reading the riot act

there is a much greater stress upon visual aspects of the disturbance. A man called 'Worsely' claimed he 'saw no Disturbance' until almost nine o'clock. Mr Kelpin also stated that the men near both fires made 'no Disturbance', and remarked that he had 'heard no manner of Uproar but at the Crown Tavern, nor did I see that the Mob went thither'. Kelpin lived in a house over Cripplegate and stated that he had seen the activities from his window. Although it would seem plausible that some sounds made by the men had attracted his attention and prompted him to investigate the scene, he did not make this connection in his statement. Mrs Brown, also for the defence, stated that she 'saw the Affair from the Beginning to the End.' The only sound that she recalled was a gun shot issued by the soldiers. The entire account of the event provided by Joseph Jude, also for the defence, is sight-based and does not mention any form of audible activity. The only defence witness who mentioned sounds made by Williams' supporters referred to hallooing, which, in the early modern period, could be both aggressive and celebratory.

The crucial distinction to make in order to attribute guilt was the point at which the gathering turned violent. The accounts of the defence witnesses suggest that the occasion was initially festive, and only degenerated into violence with the involvement of the soldiers. When the soldiers in the tavern came out, one witness claimed that several of them were drunk and violent, and another that they had kicked out the bonfire. The sounds described suggest that these people might, as part of their celebration, have wished to attract attention, to rub in the humiliation of defeat for the whig supporting candidate. At some point menace substituted triumphalism, either in the minds of the aggressors, or their targets, or both. While the witnesses for the prosecution claimed that reading the riot act

temporarily quietened the rioters, the witnesses for the defence claimed that it exacerbated the situation, increasing the violence and in effect caused the riot.[107]

Most of the witnesses for the prosecution believed that the intent of Williams' supporters was violent from the outset. Witness statements suggest that the accused knew that soldiers were dining in the Tavern and one witness for the defence described them as 'a Party of the Killing-Captains'. These men may have been the target of the taunting sounds made outside the Crown Tavern. The motivation to make these sounds might have been to scare the soldiers or to incite them. The hissing and rattling of clubs did frighten the patrons of the Crown Coffee House, who hurried upstairs in fear.

It is probable that witness evidence followed partisan lines. Witnesses who had supported Feast might have emphasised the provocative behaviour of the rioters by citing their sounds, and, conversely, supporters of Williams might have down-played them. In the summing up it was argued that the witnesses for the prosecution gave a 'more exact account' of the events than people who

> came by accidentally, stood at a Distance, or look'd thro' Windows, some of them seeing one Part, some another, and none the whole; scarce one of them speaking to any Thing that was done before nine o'Clock, tho' the Disturbance began before eight ...

In this case, the statements of the *ear*witnesses who did not see many of the activities, but heard the whole event, were accorded greater authority than the statements provided by *eye*witnesses who had only seen 'one Part, some another, and none the whole'.

---

[107] The 'Riot Act' was supposed to disperse crowds numbering twelve or more who acted riotously or who assembled tumultuously. It was designed to be read by an authorised person (magistrates and those acting under their authority) who was required to stand amongst or near to rioters after commanding silence. Hearers were expected to depart peaceably within one hour, and if they failed to do so they were regarded as committing a capital felony. Brownlie, *The Law Relating to Public Order*, pp. 201-2; Ian Gilmour, *Riot, Risings and Revolution: governance and violence in eighteenth-century England* (London, 1992), pp. 139-40; Nicholas Rogers, 'Popular protest in early Hanoverian London', *Past and Present*, 79 (1978), 70-100, p. 75

The diverse incidents detailed in this chapter exhibit some common characteristics. The sights and sounds of the initial phases of riots and attacks attracted sympathisers to join. Spectators who sympathised with their cause might have become participants. The increased numbers would have enhanced the volubility of sounds, and as a consequence would led to an escalation of violence, or at least increasing fear in those against whom such action was directed.[108] All of the events were loud, yet in some a rhythm of violence is detectable. In the Lant riot periods of violent and noisy activity were interspersed with episodes of quiet regrouping, and the incident culminated in a violent crescendo.

What motivated groups or people to make the aggressive sounds heard on the streets, and occasionally in the homes, of England? Why were the same sounds heard in different incidents? What did these sounds mean? What ends did they serve? Unfortunately there is little evidence to reveal the sensations experienced by those who were involved in these incidents because accounts were based largely on the interpretations of targets and witnesses.[109] It is possible that the Cripplegate riot was a celebration of Williams' success that turned violent, and many sounds made by the 'mob' might have been those of revelry. When men with a drum attacked William Hatfield in Derbyshire 'in most ryotous, routous and unlawful manner' they claimed that their intent was 'to be noe other end but to make merry'.[110] Those participating in riots would have felt very differently about the sounds associated with their actions than would the fearful witnesses.

Rioters were exhilarated and bolstered by the sounds they made. Their sounds might have steeled their nerves and buoyed their fervour. Analogous with war cries, these sounds would have bolstered the solidarity of the men, fuelled

---

[108] See Shoemaker, 'The London "Mob"', p. 282.
[109] See also Shoemaker, 'The London "Mob"', pp. 286-7, 294; Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, p. 149.
[110] Cited in Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, p. 149.

their aggression and intimidated those who heard them. Francis Bacon stated that from ancient times it was known that sounds could make men warlike.[111] Dudley Ryder was prompted, by hearing huzzaring and applause in a coffee house, to consider the effect of instruments on the warring combatants;

> something like the drums and trumpets in an army, to raise the courage and spirits of the soldiers. Methought it put me into a very brisk intrepid state to hear them huzza and clap hands and sing together. There is something I believe mechanical in this. It puts the spirits onto a hurry and makes them have a swifter motion as we put spirit into a dull horse by spurring it and hurrying it.[112]

War cries, trumpets and drums, whilst buoying up the courage of the attackers, would have also frightened and confused their opposition and enhanced the size of the group as it was perceived by the enemy.[113] In a letter in *The Spectator*, it was suggested that it might be possible to invent an instrument which would;

> shall sink the Spirits, and shake the Nerves, and curdle the Blood, and inspire Despair, and Cowardize, and Consternation at a surprizing rate. Whether such Anti-Musick as this might not be of Service in a Camp, I shall leave to the Military Men to consider.[114]

Thomas Procter advised that when the opposing army was orderly, soldiers should 'geve out with great noyse during the fight' in order to trouble them.[115] In 1710 Uffenbach saw a 'large artillery drum' taken from the French. Attached to the back of this drum were wooden hoops, crafted like a conical speaking trumpet. Uffenbach recorded that '[i]t emits such hideous sounds, when beaten in a room, that one is utterly deafned and thinks that the house is falling down'. The purpose

---

[111] Francis Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum*, (1627), in Bacon, *Works*, II, pp. 389-90.
[112] *Dudley Ryder*, pp. 279-80.
[113] Not all fighters needed such stimuli, one proverb noted that a 'gallant Man needs no Trumpets and Drums to rouse him', Thomas Fuller, *Gnomologia: Adagies and Proverbs, Wise Sentences and Witty Sayings, Ancient and Modern, Foreign and British* (London, 1732), p. 5, no. 124.
[114] *The Spectator*, no. 361 [Addison] 24 April 1712.
[115] Thomas Procter, *Of the knowledge and conducte of warres* (London, 1578), pp. 29-30.

was probably to create drum beats audible over the sounds of the artillery battery, yet presumably the thunderous sounds would have confused and frightened enemies by making their army seem nearer and larger.[116]

Sounds heard in civic and military contexts were also incorporated into some of the incidents, but were used to organise the activity. 'Owyes' demanded silence and instruments organised manoeuvres and drummed-up support. These sounds, learnt by watching or participating in civic events or the exercises of trained bands, would have conveyed the impression of a serious endeavour rather than the mayhem of a ramshackle band.

Many of the aggressive episodes appear to have been ritually enacted. Features common to the 'rough music' episodes were present in the assaults on the Hoby household and on the enclosure agents. Shaming rituals employed sounds which reflected the disharmony of the relationships. Couples who had transgressed accepted gender roles were particularly vulnerable to locally orchestrated rites of humiliation. The disharmony of the ritual echoed the disharmony of the relationship. A couple failing to live quietly together might have received loud and clamourous criticism from their neighbours.[117] These sounds contrasted with the clarity of bells and trumpets which signalled respect. Sweet sounds and harmony showed respect, cacophony showed disrespect.

The sounds of the rituals and tumults borrowed from the sounds of the hue and cry and of hunting.[118] These hunters sought to hound the morally lax and their political enemies. For the most hostile of these houndings, the intention might have been to drive the offender out of the community, but most frequently the

---

[116] W.H. Quarrell and Margaret Mare (eds and trans), *London in 1710 from the travels of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach* (London, 1934), p. 174 (30 October 1710); William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second* (London, 1597), III, iii, 51 'the noise of the threat'ning drum'.
[117] Ingram, 'Ridings', p. 98.
[118] Peter Razzell (ed.), *The journals of two travellers in Elizabethan and early Stuart England - Thomas Platter and Horatio Busino* (London, 1995), p. xviii.

motivation would have probably been to drum the immorality from the person. Randle Cotgrave defined the purpose of the 'foule noise' made during the charivari as 'traducing', shaming and disgracing a 'publicke defamatior'.[119] Serious physical violence was normally avoided, but these sounds would have confused and terrified their targets.[120]

Sound associations also related to the natural world. The ways that animals interacted, and the ways that people related to animals could have provided models for aggressive sounds. Early modern commentators noted that geese and serpents hissed in an aggressive and confrontational manner. Samuel Johnson noted that hissing expressed contempt and defined it as to 'utter a noise like that of a serpent and some other animals.'[121] 'Hooping', 'hallooing' and 'hooting' were the sounds of the hunt. Sixteenth-century conduct book author Francis Seager asked his young readers to desist from 'hoopynge and halowynge / as in huntynge the fox'.[122] Nathan Bailey defined 'halloo' as 'to set or incite a Dog to fall on Cattle &c' and 'Whoop' (or 'Whoopoo') as 'the cry which a shepherd makes to call his sheep together.'[123] Thomas Dekker linked hooting to the sounds made by people who scare crows.[124] Johnson described 'hooting' as '[t]o shout in contempt' and defines its usage as an attempt to drive others away with shouts and clamour.[125] If hooting and hallooing were sounds known to intimidate and hound animals, it would have seemed appropriate to also use them against people.

---

[119] A connection between 'killing of stockdoves by night' and these incidents is implicit in Cotgrave's definition in *Dictionarie*, s.v. 'charivaris'.
[120] Thompson, 'Rough Music', pp. 485-6.
[121] Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1755), s.v. 'hiss'; see also James Buchanan, *Linguae Britannicae vera pronunciatio* (London, 1757), s.v. 'hiss'; *The Country Gentleman's Vade Mecum for his Comparison for the Town* (London, 1699), p. 5; *The Country Spy; or a Ramble thro' London* (London, c. 1750), p. 11.
[122] F[rancis] S[eager], *The schoole of vertue* (London 1557) repr. in *The Babees Book*, p. 340; for a description of 'Hollowing' during the hunt see *The Spectator*, no. 16 [Budgell] 13 July 1711.
[123] Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum*, s.v. 'halloo' and 'whoop'. See also Buchanan, *Linguae Britannicae*, s.v. 'hallow'.
[124] Dekker, *The Gulls Horne-Booke*, p. 259.
[125] Johnson, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'hoot'.

The author of *Hell upon Earth: or the Town in an Uproar* (1729) connected 'Hooping' and 'Hallowing' to hunting with hounds but also suggested that excessive consumption of alcohol might engender such sounds.[126] Indeed, it is apparent that alcohol was a key ingredient in many of the aggressive activities detailed above. Excessive imbibing might have suppressed inhibitions, creating aggressive and unpredictable actions.

Aggression was frequently audible in the early modern period. It ranged from gently chiding sounds, to extremely violent displays of wrath. The sounds of ridiculing laughter, scornful hissing and the rough music of the charivari frequently acted as a substitute for actual physical violence. Whether these sounds generated fear in the intended recipients depended on the context, the time of day, the passion of the participants, and their numbers. The behaviour of people gathered in unlawful assemblies, whether orchestrated by highly motivated riot leaders or spontaneously in the alehouse, was difficult to control, and commentators wrote of the 'noise and fury of the rabble'[127] Perhaps noting the maxim 'take heed of the wrath of mighty men and the tumult of the people', early modern authorities sought to reduce the opportunities for these mobs and crowds to assemble, as seen in Chapter 5.[128] Just as the perpetrators of intimidatory and violent sounds were governed by different motivations, hearers of these sounds reacted differently to them. Some took offence, some fought back, some were unaffected, some were terrified, and some fled.

---

[126] *Hell upon Earth: or the Town in an Uproar*, (1729), facs edn, Marriage, Sex, and the Family in England, 1660-1800 (New York, 1985), p. 48; see also Thomas Nashe's comment about hunters following Orion 'hallowing and blowing their hornes' and his description of a person who is 'Ape drunke' and so leaps, sings, 'hallowes' and dances - in *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1600) and *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Divell* (1592), in Nashe, *Works*, III, p. 253 and I, p. 207.
[127] Augustus Jessopp (ed.), *The Autobiography of Roger North* (London, 1887), pp. 131-2.
[128] George Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum - Or Outlandish proverbs, sentences, &c* (London, 1651), p. 68, no. 1148.

CHAPTER 7 - THIS ISLE IS FULL OF NOISE: IRRITATING SOUNDS.

In the early modern period, the word 'noise' connoted a variety of imprecise and often contradictory meanings. 'Noise' was used to describe sounds which were musical or unmusical, pleasant or unpleasant, and could also be applied to quarrelling, strife or the spreading of rumours.[1] Indeed 'noise' was regarded by some as being synonymous with 'sound'. Randle Holme noted that 'A Sound, is any noise' and used both words interchangeably throughout his tome.[2] However, contemporaries would have understood the concept of 'noisiness' in a more narrowly defined sense. When he defined 'noisy' Samuel Johnson was more precise than when he defined 'noise', describing the latter as 'Sounding Loud', and 'Clamorous; turbulent'.[3] Likewise another dictionary compiler, Nathaniel Bailey, defined 'noisy' as 'loud, making a great noise.'[4] Noisy sounds irritated the hearer because they were loud, clamorous, importune, irregular, intrusive, disturbing, distracting, inexplicable or shocking.[5]

---

[1] For examples see *An Essay upon Harmony* (London, 1729), p. 19; *Epicoene*, III, iii, 77-8; Randle Holme, *The Academy of Armory, or, A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon*, 3 parts (Chester, 1688), II, p. 388; James Raine Jnr (ed.), *Depositions from the Castle of York, relating to offences committed in the Northern Counties in the Seventeenth Century*, The Surtees Society, 40 (Durham, 1861), p. 74; John Flavell, *Husbandry Spiritualized; or the Heavenly use of Earthly Things* (London, 1669), p. 31; Randle Cotgrave, *The Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London, 1611), s.v. 'noise'; John Kersey, *A New English Dictionary* (London, 1702), s.v. 'noise'; Nathaniel Bailey, *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (London, 1721), s.v. 'noise'; Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1755), s.v. 'noise'; *Josselin*, p. 633 (10 July 1681); *The Tatler*, no. 1 [Steele] 12 April 1709.

[2] Holme, *Academy of Armory*, II, pp. 134, 388.

[3] Johnson, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'noisy' and noisiness'.

[4] Nathaniel Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum: or a more compleat universal etymological English dictionary than any extant* (London, 1736), s.v. 'noisy'.

[5] I am adopting a tighter definition than Peter Bailey did in 'Breaking the Sound Barrier: A Historian Listens to Noise', *Body and Society*, 2 (1996), 49-66, p. 50. In early modern English dictionaries, the word 'clamorous' reveals this meaning more obviously than the word 'noise'. See, for example: Thomas Elyot, *Dictionary* (1538) facs edn (Menston, 1970), s.v. 'clamorus'; John Kersey, *Dictionarum Anglo-Britannicum: or, a general English Dictionary* (London, 1708); s.v. 'clamour'; Robert Cawdrey, *A Table Alphabeticall* (London, 1604) s.v. 'clamarus'.

In his treatise *Of Building* (1698), Roger North explained that some sounds, such as the 'clapping of a door', annoyed the hearer because, in contrast to musical sounds which have 'equall time pulses', they have 'unequall movements' and 'uncertain periods'. The reason for the disturbing quality of these 'unequall movements' is that 'every stroke is various, and depends not on the past, nor the future on that; and nothing of the measure is understood.'[6] Robert Hooke remarked that 'Noise is displeasing because the ear cannot keep up with the constant change of tuning required'.[7]

The last chapter considered the creation of sounds designed to intimidate hearers; here the focus is on sounds which were a nuisance to the hearer, but which were not intended to disturb. The flexibility of the concept of noisiness makes it a slippery one to examine. People were more sensitive to sounds at certain times of the day, and a sound produced in the day might have been regarded as a noise if it was made at night. Sounds were especially irritating when they prevented sleep or concentration. On his arrival in Northampton in 1669, Cosmo the Grand Duke of Tuscany was delighted by the parish bells rung in his honour, 'being well tuned, the sound of them was very agreeable'. However, when the ringing continued for a great part of the night he found them to be 'a great interruption to sleep.'[8] Upon moving to a house in Manchester in 1661, Reverend Henry Newcome was distracted by noise when preparing a sermon, writing in his diary; 'I was ill put to

---

[6] Howard Colvin and John Newman (eds), *Of Building. Roger North's Writings on Architecture* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 10-11. See also Augustus Jessopp (ed.), *The Autobiography of Hon. Roger North* (London, 1887), pp. 40-1, 106-7.

[7] Robert Hooke 'A Curious Dissertation', transcr. in Penelope M. Gouk, 'The Role of Acoustics and Music Theory in the Scientific Work of Robert Hooke', *Annals of Science*, 37 (1980), 573-605, p. 605.

[8] Lorenzo Magalotti, *Travels of Cosmo the Third, Grand Duke of Tuscany, through England, during the Reign of King Charles the Second*, ed. Joseph Mawman (London, 1821), p. 245. See also Ralph Thoresby's reaction to celebrations which went on too long in 1702, Joseph Hunter (ed.), *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby FRS, Author of the Topography of Leeds (1677-1724)*, 2 vols (London, 1830), I, p. 390 (3 September 1702).

it amongst the noise & clatter in the house at such a time'.[9] A sound which was acceptable in one setting might have been considered inappropriate in another, and therefore deemed to be noise. Echoing anthropologist Mary Douglas who judged dirt as 'matter out of place', Peter Bailey defined noise as 'sound out of place.'[10] Sounds were 'out of place' when issued in an inappropriate place or at inappropriate times.

Many references to noise come from highly subjective sources such as diaries, travel accounts and autobiographies. Those most sensitive to noise would have been more likely to grumble about them. A sound which irritated one person, and was perceived as noise, may have been tolerable or pleasurable to another. Sensitivity to sounds was influenced by the degree of exposure to a sound environment. Some perpetually noisy sounds which had become familiar to the hearer would have been rarely mentioned because they were no longer noticed, or because a comment would have seemed banal. When Will Stankes visited Pepys from the country, he found the traffic and bustle of London's streets to be overwhelming. Pepys remarked about how Stankes 'rails at the rumbling and ado that is in London over it is in the country, that he cannot endure it.'[11] Pepys, a citizen, never himself complained about the ubiquitous sounds of metropolitan life in his diary.

Sensitivity to sounds might have changed during a person's life. Living near Hammersmith church in the 1720s, Lady Arabella Howard, who was 'of a sickly and weak Constitution', was disturbed by the sound of the five o'clock bell every morning. She and her husband first considered moving to another parish, but it was suggested that she might like to 'purchase her Quiet.' Her husband, Dr.

---

[9] Thomas Heywood (ed.), *The Diary of the Rev. Henry Newcome, from September 30, 1661 to September 29, 1663*, The Chetham Society, 18 (Manchester, 1849), p. 1 (30 September 1661).
[10] Bailey, 'Breaking the Sound Barrier', p. 50.
[11] *Pepys*, IV, p. 118 (29 April 1663).

Martin, struck a deal with the churchwardens, exchanging a cupola, a clock and a bell for a promise 'to stay the ringing of the five o'clock Bell.' However, when Nutkin, a new churchwarden, resumed the morning ringing after a lapse of two years, Martin brought an action against him, the other churchwardens, the Parson, the Overseers and several inhabitants of Hammersmith. He secured an injunction from the court of Chancery. In the hearing it was ruled that the bells should not ring at five during the lifetimes of both Martin and his wife, as such ringing was of 'very ill Consequence to the Plaintiff the Lady Howard.'[12] This is a rare instance of an individual using the law to silence a sound; however the fact that it was brought before Chancery, a court which specialised in matters of equity, suggests that the ruling was not motivated by a desire to protect the plaintiff's health, but to ensure that a deal was honoured.[13] The case is interesting nonetheless, because to a woman unable to attend morning service due to disability the signal which called people to church was 'undesired'; it was noise.

Hypersensitivity to sounds was a concept early modern people would have understood. In his play, *Epicoene, or the Silent Woman*, (written in 1609), Ben Jonson introduces the character of Morose, a man newly betrothed to the eponymous bride, who during the course of the play finds her to be neither silent nor a woman. Morose, 'a gentleman that loves no noise' is duped into marrying Epicoene 'a young gentleman suppos'd the silent woman' through the trickery of his nephew, Dauphine. Preferring life as a quiet bachelor to the state of marriage, which he supposes would be noisy, Morose had asked his barber, Cutbeard, to find him a suitably quiet wife. Silent until the wedding ceremony, Epicoene suddenly becomes loquacious. When the wedding guests wreak auditory havoc in Morose's

---

[12] *Martin v. Nutkin et al* (1724), William Peere Williams, *Reports of Cases argued and determined in the High Court of Chancery*, 3 vols (London, 1740-9), II, pp. 266-7.
[13] Geoffrey R. Elton (ed.), *The Tudor Constitution. Documents and Commentary*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 148-52.

house his suffering becomes extreme and he demands a divorce. Morose pays Dauphine to help him secure release, who obliges by throwing off Epicoene's disguise and revealing the young man.

Morose's obsession with noise is portrayed as anti-social, self-important and, at times, tyrannical. Jonson wrote *Epicoene* after a plague epidemic and the incessantly tolling church bells which bid farewell to victims caused Morose much consternation. The lengths to which he goes to avoid their clangour are detailed, 'now by reason of the sickness, the perpetuity of ringing has made him devise a room with double walls, and treble ceilings, the windores close shut and caulk'd, and there he lives by candlelight'.[14] Resenting knocks on his door, Morose bids Mute, (his servant) to remove the 'ring' from the door and to fasten a thick quilt or feather bed to the outside of it, 'that if they knock with their daggers or with brickbats, they can make no noise'. When the sounding of a postman's horn permeates the padded door, Morose embarks on a tirade. Morose's pathological aversion to noise is manifested in his taking umbrage at the sounds of creaking shoes and hair-trimming. When the parson, whom Morose has paid to perform his wedding ceremony, coughs, Morose demands to be reimbursed.[15] A sonic theme persists until the dramatic crescendo of the post-nuptial celebrations. The 'noise' of the musicians overwhelm Morose, who exclaims 'Tis worse than the noise of a saw'. Thronging with spitting, coughing, laughing, 'neezing' and farting guests, Morose's once quiet haven becomes a roaring hell.[16]

Epicoene enjoyed a period of heightened appreciation after the Restoration, and between them Elizabeth and Samuel Pepys attended at least six performances of it (or extracts from it) during the 1660s.[17] In his prefatory essay of 1668, John

---

[14] *Epicoene*, I, i, 173-7.
[15] *ibid.*, I, i, 178-80; I, ii, 36-9; III, iv, 13-19
[16] *ibid.*, II, i, 1-41; III, vii, 3-5, 44-7; IV, i, 7-10.
[17] *Pepys*, I, p. 309 (4 December 1660); II, p. 7 (7 January 1661); p. 106 (25 May 1661); V, p. 165 (1 June 1664): VIII, p. 169 (16 April 1667); IX, p. 310 (19 September 1668).

Dryden seemed to take a sympathetic line towards Morose, writing, 'We may consider him first to be naturally of a delicate hearing, as many are, to whom all sharp sounds are unpleasant; and secondly, we may attribute much of it to the peevishness of his age, or the wayward authority of an old man in his own house.' Dryden also asserted that although he is risible, Morose is an entirely believable character, adding 'I am assured from divers persons, that Ben Johnson [sic] was actually acquainted with such a man, one altogether as ridiculous as he is here represented.'[18]

Without due caution, reliance on literary sources and personal documents might lead to an exaggeration of the prevalence of noise and susceptibilities to noise disturbance. At the least, citing those sensitive hearers who did document their thoughts about noise will indicate which sounds *could* have been considered to be a nuisance to other members of society and under which circumstances certain sounds *might* have been regarded as 'noise'. It is essential not to become exclusively preoccupied with individual cases, but to look to the wider social context, and to recognise that prevailing cultural mores also influenced perceptions of whether certain sounds were tolerable.

Sound out of place

Some sounds were intolerable in certain contexts, especially formal ones. Any sound made in a church during divine service would have been considered to be a noise if it was distracting, irreverent, or prevented the congregation from hearing the Word of God. Hours of service were not the only times when quiet was desirable. When sounds were made at night they carried the potential to keep

---

[18] John Dryden, 'Of Dramatick Poesie, an Essay' (1668), in W.P. Ker (ed.), *Essays of John Dryden*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1900), I, p. 84.

citizens awake. In the following section, the special significance of sounds made in church, and sounds made at night are considered.

The Canons of 1603 include the following: 'A reverence and attention to be used within the church in time of divine service' and 'Disturbers of divine service to be presented'. The latter category included people 'which behave themselves rudely and disorderly in the Church, by walking, talking or other noise, shall hinder the minister or preacher.'[19] Part of the responsibilities of the clerk of St Margaret's parish church, New Fish Street in London, was to 'enquire and see what servants doe sett covered with their caps on, or doe sleep, or talke during the sermon, and doe admonish them'.[20] A person who created a noisy disturbance in church during divine service might have been presented to a church court.[21] The wife of George Miriall of Carlton in Lindrick, was presented to the archdeacon's court of Nottingham in 1620 for bringing into church 'a most unquiet childe ... to the greate offence of the whole congregation.' The minister claimed that he was forced to halt the prayers because he could not be heard over 'the offensive noyce'.[22] Giving evidence in the case of Christopher Bramley, who was accused of brawling in church in March 1655, Josiah Hunter, 'the minister of both Ouseburnes', remarked that he could not provide a full account of Bramley's

---

[19] Gerald Bray (ed.), *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, Church of England Record Series, 6 (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 288-9, 411. See also Canons of 1571, pp. 189, 191.
[20] London, GL, MS 1175/1 St Margaret's, New Fish Street, Vestry Minute Book 1578-1789, fol. 40v.
[21] Frederick George Emmison, *Elizabethan Life: morals and the Church Courts*, Essex Record Office Publications, 63 (Chelmsford, 1973), pp. 136-8, 264-7; Samuel Rawson Gardiner (ed.), *Reports of Cases in the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission*, The Camden Society, new ser., 39 (London, 1886), pp. 280-1, note especially the editor's comment; J.A. Twemlow (ed.), *Liverpool Town Books*, 2 vols (Liverpool, 1918-36), II, pp. 493, 642. For other examples see Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority. Formative Experiences in England 1560-1640* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 195-6; J.F. Williams (ed.), *Diocese of Norwich: Bishop Redman's visitation, 1597. Presentments in the Archdeaconries of Norwich, Norfolk and Suffolk,* Norfolk Record Society, 18 (London, 1946), p. 127.
[22] R.F.B. Hodgkinson (ed.), 'Extracts from the Act books of the Archdeacons of Nottingham II', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 30 (Nottingham, 1926) 11-57, p. 55 (22 August 1620).

words, as they 'could not be distinctly heard above the noise of the people who, disturbed, rose & looked at him.'[23]

Dr. Martin and Lady Howard were unusual because they complained about the early chiming of the Hammersmith morning service bell. Disturbance was more commonly caused when ringing occurred late at night. The church courts regarded the untimely ringing of bells, either during service or at night, as an abuse. Frederick Emmison identified six occasions of disorderly ringing at night which were presented by Essex churchwardens between 1596 and 1599.[24] Five servants were presented by the churchwarden of Graffam for ringing the bells at Christmas 1626 'very disorderly' all night, 'so that we could not sleep quietly in our beds, and the parrishioners found great fault with it.'[25]

One source of persistent nocturnal nuisance was a noisy alehouse, and one proverb warned 'Chuse not an house neer an inn (viz. for noise) or in a corner (for filth).'[26] Neighbours of alehouses might have been disturbed by the noises of the patrons coming and going at night.[27] By an Act of 1552 alehouse keepers were required to gain a licence from a justice of the peace in order to guarantee the prevention of 'hurts and trobles ... abuses and disorders.'[28] These encompassed many minor offences, such as drunkenness. Keepers who regularly failed to prevent drunken disorder might have found themselves before the justices, with

---

23 Raine (ed.), *Depositions of York*, p. 71.
24 Emmison, *Elizabethan Life: Morals*, p. 137.
25 Hilda Johnstone (ed.), *Churchwardens' Presentments (17th Century), Archdeaconry of Chichester*, Sussex Record Society, 49 (Lewes, 1948), p. 126. See also Hodgkinson (ed.), 'Extracts from the Acts Books of the Archdeacons of Nottingham II', p.29; R.F.B. Hodgkinson (ed.), 'Extracts from the Acts Books of the Archdeacons of Nottingham III' *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 31 (Nottingham, 1927), 108-53, p. 138.
26 George Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum - Or Outlandish proverbs, sentences &c* (London, 1651), p. 330, no. 286.
27 London, GL, MS 3018/1 St Dunstan-in-the-West Wardmote Inquest (1558-1823), fol. 27v.
28 J.A Sharpe, 'Crime and Delinquency in an Essex parish 1600-1640' in J.S. Cockburn (ed.), *Crime in England, 1550-1800* (London, 1977), p. 102; Keith E. Wrightson, 'Alehouses, order and reformation' in Eileen and Stephen Yeo (eds), *Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590-1914* (Brighton, 1980); Keith E. Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London, 1982), p. 167.

their licence in jeopardy.[29] In the 1580s the common council of Bristol imposed a regime of time regulations on alehouses. Keepers were expected to close their houses and cease trading 'after the Bowe bell ceased ringinge nyne of the clocke at night' or forfeit ten shillings. This rule was drafted in order to control the 'abuses and enormityes' which occurred when 'divers lewde, idle and evell disposed persons' were permitted to drink and play unlawful games 'at unseasonable howers, to the manifeste disturbaunce of her Majesties peace'.[30]

Adherence to prescribed hours of trading would have limited nocturnal noise for those in the neighbourhood, yet these laws and regulations were frequently flouted by licensed keepers, and unlicensed alehouses proliferated. John Banester, an 'inholder and tipler' of York was forbidden to keep an alehouse in June 1589 following an incident at his house at midnight, when 'divers disordered fidlers and other persons' disturbed the neighbourhood.[31] Six alehouse keepers were presented to the Worcester Sessions of the Peace between 1634 and 1638 for disturbing neighbours at night. In 1634 it was claimed that John Browne, selling ale at 'undue times' of the night, kept 'odious and sinful drunkenness in his house at all times so that his neighbours cannot rest in their houses for the odious noise of drunkenness and the voices of drunken men in the night time.' In 1638 four people were presented for unlicensed alehouse keeping when neighbours complained about the 'divers sorts of people' entertained there who disturbed them 'in the dead time of the night'.[32]

---

[29] Michael Dalton, *The Countrey Justice. Conteyning the practise of the Justices of the peace out of their sessions* (London, 1618), p. 25.
[30] Maureen Stanford (ed.), *The Ordinances of Bristol 1506-1598*, Publications of the Bristol Record Society, 41 (Bristol, 1990), p. 79.
[31] D. Sutton (ed.), *York Civic Records IX*, The Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Society, 138 (Leeds, 1978), p. 55.
[32] J.W. Willis Bund (ed.), *Calendar of the Quarter Sessions Papers, 1591-1643*, Worcestershire Historical Society, 11 (Worcester, 1900), pp. 567, 648, 657.

Curfews were not intended specifically to limit noise, but this would have been an inevitable consequence and would have effectively marked off periods of noise from periods of relative quiet. Whilst limiting the possibilities for noise to disrupt, the curfew would have also created a symbolic boundary, with sounds heard during curfew gaining heightened suspicion. The constable or members of the watch were empowered to take anybody acting suspiciously, or 'nightwalking', to a house of correction if they could not provide a reasonable excuse for their whereabouts during curfew hours.[33]

Curfew rules and conventions meant that the streets should have been devoid of noisy people at night, but in reality they were not. In *Amusements Serious and Comical* (1700), the hack Tom Brown described London as a 'prodigious, and noisy city, where repose and silence dare scarce shew their heads in the darkest night.'[34] The author of *Low-Life* described London streets of the mid-eighteenth century and detailed how urban sounds changed throughout the day and the night. Between midnight and one o'clock in the morning on a Sunday in June alehouse keepers are portrayed encouraging their patrons ('noisy Fools and Drunkards') to leave the premises for fear of prosecution. According to this account, the markets were still active at this hour, as were prostitutes and itinerant musicians. During the following hour the streets gradually quietened, 'as the Whores, Bullies and Thieves have retir'd to their Apartments; noisy drunken Mechanicks are got to their Lodgings, Coachmen, Watermen and Soldiers are mostly asleep.' The noise of the morning swelled after five o'clock, when the dog-skinner, with strays in tow, searched for more, and bells tolled for morning services. Sounds intensified and then plateaued over the following hours, until

---

[33] Mary G. Hobson and Herbert Edward Salter (eds), *Oxford Council Acts, 1626-1665*, Oxford Historical Society, 95 (Oxford, 1933), p. 171.
[34] Tom Brown, *Amusements Serious and Comical. Calculated for the Meridian of London* (London, 1700), p. 20.

night-time, when the crowded streets thinned and the sounds of customers leaving alehouses were joined by, 'Great hallowing and whooping in the Fields, by such Persons who have spent the Day Abroad, and are now returning Home half drunk'.[35]

The time at which a crime or misdemeanour was committed was often a factor when determining its seriousness. In addition to endangering the victim, nocturnal assaults could have created nuisance for the public at large. In 1599 Thomas Jackson of Eccleshall assaulted the vicar's daughter and servant at night, 'and by the way abused them & toke the grasse & basketes from them making a great sturre when men were in bed'. The addition of 'when men were in bed' emphasises the anti-social nature of his behaviour.[36] In the recognizances for each of the eleven men seized by the guard of Hackney in 1662 it was stated that he 'is a p[er]son suspicious for that he cannot give any good Accompt of his being here, at that unseasonable tyme.'[37] In 1728, the constable of Deanery Ward, Westminster, threatened George Wright 'in the Night time in the street'. Wright's landlady complained about the constable's behaviour, claiming that he had made 'a Ryott and disturbance at her house in the Dead of the Night.'[38]

Noises were not just made in church, or at night. Some people experienced prolonged problems arising from the inconsiderateness of their neighbours. Others

---

[35] *Low-Life; or one half of the world knows not how the Other Half Live ... in the Twenty-four Hours, between Saturday-Night and Monday-Morning. In a true Description of a Sunday, as it is usually spent within the Bills of Mortality,* 3rd edn (London, 1764), pp. 3, 22, 95.

[36] S.A.H. Burne (ed.), *The Staffordshire Quarter Sessions Rolls IV 1598-1602*, Staffordshire Record Society, 59 (London, 1939), p. 133. See similar examples in Twemlow (ed.), *Town Books of Liverpool*, II, p. 395 (23 Oct 1581); London, LMA, MJ/SR/542, rec. 30; MJ/SR/552, rec. 11; MJ/SR/589, rec. 6; see also recs 57-8; London, CLRO, Rep. 44, fol. 229; London, LMA, MJ/GBR/7, fol. 234; John Cordy Jeaffreson (ed.), *Middlesex County Records*, Middlesex County Record Society, 4 vols (London, 1886-92), III, pp. 62-4.

[37] London, LMA, MJ/SR/1252, recs 129-31, 135, 137-8, 140-4; see also London, CLRO, Misc. Mss -58/35, 'Committee investigating nuisances committed by Bridewell Boys in early 18th century'; 'Information ab[out] Bridewell boys taken 11 Nove 1715'.

[38] William Henry Manchée (ed.), *The Westminster City Fathers, the Burgess Court of Westminster, 1585-1901* (London, 1924), p. 32. See also p. 47.

found the sounds of noisy workpractices, or of trading or traffic, were intruding on their life. These issues are considered in the following sections.

Noisy neighbours

Francis Bacon advised that on choosing a location for a dwelling one should avoid 'ill Neighbours'.[39] According to Keith Wrightson, neighbourliness in the early modern period involved 'a degree of normative consensus as to the nature of proper behaviour between neighbours.' When noting that it was understood that neighbours should 'at the least live peaceably and harmoniously' in the community, Wrightson was not referring explicitly to levels of noise emission, but his statement could apply to noise.[40] 'Proper behaviour' might have involved a considerate concern for the issuance of sounds. Good neighbours would have ensured that those in their vicinity were not disturbed by sounds made by their animals, their children, their pastimes or produced by their 'living unquietly' together.

If expectations of good neighbourliness were not sufficiently persuasive to restrict noise, rule 30 of *The Lawes of the Market* (1595) required that:

> No man shall after the houre of nine at the Night, keepe any rule whereby any such suddaine out-cry be made in the still of the Night, as making any affray, or beating hys Wife, or servant, or singing, or revyling in his house, to the Disturbaunce of his neighbours under payne of iii^{s} iiij^{d}.[41]

Amongst Exeter's civic laws of the sixteenth century appeared a prohibition against keeping 'foredores open', ordering that they should be kept 'closed and made fast and to kepe and see to be kept all good Rule order and tranquilitie.'[42]

---

[39] Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels, civill and morall* (London, 1625), 'Of Building', 2L1v.
[40] Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 51-3.
[41] *Lawes of the Market* (1595), facs. edn (Amsterdam, 1974), no. 30.
[42] Walter J. Harte, J.W. Schopp and H. Tapley-Soper (eds), *The Description of the Citie of Excester, by John Vowell alias Hoker, gentleman and chamberlayne of the same*, Publications of the Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 3 vols (Exeter, 1919-47), III, p. 851.

When Pepys wrote that he had disturbed his neighbours by forcing his wife to beat a servant, his shame did not stem from the possibility of his acquiring a reputation for cruelty, but from the noise nuisance generated by the thrashing.[43] William Humphrey and Mary Pennit were presented by the Vicar of Peasmarsh in 1675 for failing to attend church, and for 'keeping company togeather neight and day, and drinking and noise and other disorderly doeings in the neight time'.[44] The landlord of an 'ordinary' who lodged at the Marigold, Fleet Street, was presented to the wardmote of St-Dunstan-in-the-West in 1619 for 'disturbing the quiet of John Clarke and his family (being next neighbours) late in the nights from tyme to tyme by ill-disorder'.[45]

People in both rural and provincial areas often shared their homes with animals, especially during the earliest part of the early modern period. Although spaces occupied by humans and animals gradually became more separate, it is likely that animal sounds permeated living quarters. Pigs suited an industrialising milieu as they ate waste and did not require fodder, and were frequently described as common sights on London's streets.[46] Pigs also happen to be particularly loud and raucous animals.[47] In accounts of neighbours being presented or fined for keeping animals there is often ambiguity about whether the nuisance centred around sounds, ordure, the hindering of traffic and pedestrians, or the spoilage of goods because they are usu ally presented simply as a 'nuisance'.[48] Three men

---

[43] *Pepys*, VI, p. 39 (19 February 1665).
[44] Hilda Johnstone (ed.), *Churchwardens' Presentments (Seventeenth Century) part 2, Archdeaconry of Lewes*, Sussex Record Society, 50 (Lewes, 1949), p. 12.
[45] London, GL, MS 3018/1 Wardmote Presentments for St Dunstan-in-the-West 1558-1823, fols 15v, 101v. For similar incidents see fols 61v, 90, 244, and London, LMA, MJ/SR/541, rec. 22.
[46] Pauline Frost 'Yeomen and Metalsmiths: Livestock in the Dual Economy in South Staffordshire 1560-1720' in *Agricultural Historical Review*, 22 (1981), 29-41.
[47] One proverb observed that 'He that loves noise must buy a pig', John Captain Stevens, *A new Spanish and English dictionary* (London, 1706), s.v. 'ruydo'. See also Robert Malcolmson and Stephen Mastrois, *The English Pig. A History* (London, 1998), p. 30.
[48] Angelo Raine (ed.), *York Civic Records VII*, The Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 115 (Wakefield, 1950), p. 113; Levi Fox (ed.), *Coventry Constables' Presentments 1629-1742*, Publications of the Dugdale Society, 34 (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1986), p. 34; Johnstone (ed),

from the parish of Giles-in-the-Fields were indicted in 1616 for keeping pigs near the house of Abraham Phillipps and causing an unspecified nuisance.[49] In 1733, Lewis Smart, who lived near Tottenham Court Road, was indicted for nuisance. He kept between three-hundred and five-hundred pigs.[50] Whether or not noise was the central issue of these cases, they indicate that in some locations the sounds of pigs grunting and rooting would have been common.

Pigs were not the only noisy animals to inhabit the capital and not without reason did one proverb warn that 'one barking Dog sets all the Street a barking'.[51] On 15 January 1660 Pepys was disturbed by the barking of a neighbour's dog and recorded the consequences in his diary; 'I could not sleep for an hour or two, I slept late; and then in the morning took physic, and so stayed within all day.'[52] Besides numerous strays, dogs which were also kept for hunting, turning the kitchen spit and as pets inhabited London's streets. Two men were presented to the wardmote inquest of St Dunstan-in-the-West in 1622 for 'anoyinge of divers Inhabitants in ffleet street and the white ffryers' by killing dogs to feed to hawks. Mention was made of their practice of keeping the dogs prior to their slaughter 'longe alyve, howlinge and crying' and also that the blood from their corpses grew noisome and posed a threat of infection.[53]

Churchwardens' Presentments of Lewes, p. 67.

[49] William Le Hardy, *Calendar to the Sessions Records, new series* (1612-16), Middlesex County Records, 3 vols (London, 1935-7), III, p. 62.

[50] 'An extraordinary nuisance case' in George Harris, *The Life of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke,* 3 vols (London, 1847), I, pp. 266-70.

[51] Thomas Fuller *Gnomologia: Adagies and Proverbs; Wise Sentences and Witty Sayings, Ancient and Modern, Foreign and British* (London, 1732), p. 159, no. 3736.

[52] *Pepys*, I, pp. 17-18 (15 January 1660).

[53] London, GL, MS 3018/1- Wardmote Presentments for St Dunstan-in-the-West 1558-1823, fol. 106.

The noise of work: The Apothecary's morter spoils the Luter's musick[54]

People engaged in certain trades generated noises which affected people living or working in the immediate vicinity. Coopers and other craftsmen producing hollow goods had a special reputation as noise-makers. In November 1639 the Norwich Court of Mayorality investigated a case of 'extraordinary noise' from a cooper's shop, and sixty years later the compiler of *A View of the Penal Laws Concerning Trade and Trafick* (1697) remarked that a '*Cooper* ... is a man that makes a great Noise in the World'.[55] The metal hammering and construction trades also stand out as prolific sources of noise in the period. In Jonson's *Epicoene*, pewterers, armourers and braziers are singled out as particular causes of Morose's disquiet.[56] In 1611 Abraham Shakemaple, a yeomen of Finsbury, was bound over to appear at the next sessions of the peace for Middlesex to answer to the charge that he had caused a nuisance by erecting and using a forge. In the meantime he was ordered to 'pull downe his Smythes forge which he hath lately erected in Grubstreet, being a great Annoyance to the neighbours by the filthie smoake and the hameringe &c'.[57]

The homes of urban craftsmen often doubled as workshops, especially when the trade involved the production of small items, requiring only one workman and his apprentice. Michael Power notes that the soapmakers, gunpowder-makers, tailors and smiths, amongst other craftsmen of seventeenth-century London, would have worked predominantly at home.[58] In his designs for the reconstruction of London following the fire of 1666, John Evelyn segregated shopkeepers from

---

[54] Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum*, p. 351, no. 925.
[55] William L. Sachse (ed.), *Minutes of the Norwich Court of Mayorality 1630-1631*, Norfolk and Norwich Record Society, 15 (London, 1942), p. 48; *A View of the Penal Laws Concerning Trade and Trafick, Alphabetically disposed under proper Heads* (London, 1697), p. 52.
[56] *Epicoene*, I, i, 148-51.
[57] London, LMA, MJ/SBR/1 fol. 420.
[58] Michael J. Power, 'The East London Working Community in the Seventeenth Century' in Penelope J. Corfield and Derek Keene (eds), *Work in Towns 850-1850* (Leicester, 1990), p. 113.

artificers. The shopkeepers would occupy the sweetest quarters and the artificers would occupy 'the more ordinary houses, intermedial and narrower passages ... that the noise and tintamarre of their instruments may be the less importunate.'[59]

Particular areas of the early modern capital were more menaced by work noise than others. The pewter industry, for example, was concentrated around Billingsgate and Bishopsgate Wards.[60] John Stow described the practice of the founders of Lothbury who 'cast candlesticks, chafing dishes, spice mortars, and such like copper or latten works' in his description of London in 1598. He even suggested that the name Lothbury was derived from the unpleasant sounds of that area. He described the sound made when the founders rasp and file metals ready for sale as 'scratting' and observed that it was a 'loathesome noyse to the by-passers that have not been used to the like, and therefore by them disdainfully called Lothburie.'[61] Areas of other towns, or even entire towns, were also noted for their noisy trades. Seventeenth-century Birmingham (or 'Bremicham') was described as 'swarming with Inhabitants, and echoing with the noise of the Anvils', as many people were employed in the iron or steel trades.[62]

Metalworkers had been unpopular in medieval towns due to their noise and the danger of fire which they posed. By the thirteenth century blacksmiths had been restricted to special areas in cities and towns.[63] Amongst the conditions for the lease of a plot to the west of Prince Street, Bristol, held by a deal merchant in the 1720s, was the following; 'No part of the ground to the rear to be used for

---

[59] John Evelyn, *London Revived* (1666), cited by Cynthia Wall, *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 44.
[60] John Hatcher and Theodore Cardwell Barker (eds) *A History of British Pewter* (London, 1974), p. 119.
[61] John Stow, *A Survey of London* (1598) ed. Henry Morley as *A Survey of London written in the year 1598* (London, 1912), p. 269.
[62] Edmund Gibson (ed.), *Camden's Britannia, Newly Translated into English: with large Additions and Improvements* (London, 1695), sig. Ii3, column 505. See also Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance. Culture and society in the provincial town 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 43-4.
[63] Raymond Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World* (New York, 1977), p. 190.

yards, for timber etc., or for stabling, but to be used solely for warehousing.' Tenants could not use the property as smiths' workshops, tallow chandlers warehouses or any other shops for traders likely to 'annoy the neighbouring Inhabitants'.[64]

In the early modern period it was difficult to maintain adequate artificial lighting for long periods so nightfall would have reduced working hours, thereby limiting occupational sounds. However, light sources were not the only limiting factor and craftsmen who used hammers in their work were specifically restricted by rule 25 of *The Lawes of the Market* (1595), which ordered that 'No hammar man, [such] as a Smith a Pewterer, a Founder, and all Artificers making great sound, shall not worke after the houre of nyne in the night, nor afore the houre of four in the Morninge, under payne of iiis iiijd.'[65]

Coppersmiths made copper artefacts, brewers' vats, church vanes and various types of vessel. They were the focus of much comment and criticism concerning noisy work-practices during the period, especially during the eighteenth century. Campbell, in his 'compendious view of all the trades' of the mid-eighteenth century, noted that the journey men of the coppersmith trade 'ought to live by themselves, for they are very noisy Neighbours.'[66] A complaint recorded in the repertories of the Court of London Aldermen concerned Andrew Niblett, a noisy coppersmith who in September 1722 had 'lately taken a messuage in Birchin Alley'. Several neighbours petitioned the court because although they had been led to believe that Niblett only intended to use his premises to warehouse goods that he sold for the plantation trade. Yet;

---

[64] J. Bold, 'The Design of a House for a Merchant, 1724' *Architectural History Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain*, 33 (1990), 75-82, p. 76; see also Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance,* pp. 294-5.
[65] *Lawes of the Market*, no. 25.
[66] R. Campbell, *The London Tradesman; being a compendious view of all the trades, professions, arts, both liberal and mechanic now practised in the cities of London and Westminster* (London, 1747), p. 264.

> the said Niblett contrary to his agreement and the Intentions of his Landlord has used his sledges and other large Hammers in his Trade to the apparent Interruption and annoyance of the Neighbourhood which is inconceivable and hardly to be Expressed they being almost incapable of Negotiating their Affairs through the intolerable and continial Annoyance of the said Niblett.

The petitioners were unsure to whom they should take their problem and it was noted that they 'presume a Power is vested in this Court to prevent such Nusances, wherefore they pray such reliefe as the Court should think fit'. The aldermen did not seem to know whether they had the jurisdiction to deal with it, and if they did, how they should proceed. It was ordered that the town clerk should search through the records to discover how the court had dealt with any similar complaint in the past, and to report his findings to the next meeting. No reference to any previous similar incident is recorded at this meeting and it was judged that Niblett should attend the court in two weeks' time.[67] However, no other record is made of this case, or of Niblett, in future minutes.[68] The London coppersmiths were insufficiently numerous to establish their own trade guild but Andrew Niblett can be traced to the Armourers' and Brasiers' Company, of which he was a member during the period.[69] In 1724 Niblett was fined for having too many apprentices and he was elected as an assistant of the company at the same meeting. Four years later Niblett was given a week to pay a fine of three pounds for non-attendance at meetings. He was elected Master in 1732.[70]

---

[67] London, CRLO, Rep. 126, fols 473-4, 494.
[68] There are also no references to Niblett's noise in the wardmote inquest for Cornhill Ward, London, GL MS 4069/2, Cornhill Wardmote Inquest Minute Book, 1652-1733.
[69] The braziers of the seventeenth century were not organised. London, GL, MS 22,207, 'The humble petition of the Coppersmiths being freemen of London: and many of them of this Company.' (late-sixteenth or early-seventeenth century) Only in 1708 did those 'working and making vessels and wares of copper and brass wrought with the hammer' in London become incorporated with the armourers as the Armourers' and Brasiers' Company of the City of London, H. Hamilton, *The English Brass and Copper Industries to 1800*, 2nd edn (London 1967), p. 86; London, GL, MS 12,071/5, Armourers' and Brasiers' Company Court Minutes 1719-1733, fol. 82v.
[70] London, GL, MS 12,071/5, Amourers' and Brasiers' Company Court Minutes 1719-1733, fols 59, 92v.

Plausible reasons why coppersmiths were singled out for particular attention can be deduced from the nature of their materials, tools and methods. The historical development of their trade also hints at reasons for their stigmatism. Copper was generally beaten when cold and offers greater resistance than the other metals which were also beaten cold (gold, silver and tin), and therefore needed to be hammered more vigorously and for protracted periods.[71] This solidity would result in high-pitched notes when struck with iron hammers (iron being a harder substance than copper) and the hollowness of the vessels produced in coppersmithery would have amplified the hammer blows.[72] Although the compiler of *A General Description of All Trades* (1747) did not make any mention of the sounds of the coppersmith, he did describe those of the anchor-smith, a craft which would have been located in coastal areas. Anchor-smithery was described as laborious work;

> being little else but blowing and tending a vast Fire, and striking with large Sledge-hammers; though in doing this they have a Slight, and a clever Knack of following one another's Strokes, in such a Manner that they seem to keep time, the Noise of which at some Distance, sounds as if they were beating Changes, there being often six, eight, or ten of them striking at one Anchor.[73]

The coppersmith (working alone) would not have been able to produce such a seemingly musical and rhythmical sound. The Italian physician Bernardino Ramazzini, in his comprehensive treatise on occupational diseases, included coppersmiths in a supplement to the 1713 edition of his work. Highlighting the incessant noise of their trade, Ramazzini noted that coppersmiths

---

[71] Francis Bacon identified the discovery of whether hot or cold brass sounds loudest when struck with a hammer as a future line of enquiry in 'The History and First Inquisition of Sound and Hearing', trans. in Basil Montagu (ed.), *The Works of Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England*, 16 vols (London, 1825-36), XV, p. 233.
[72] W. C. Roberts-Austen, *An Introduction to the Study of Metallurgy*, 5th edn (London, 1902), p. 18.
[73] *A General Description of all Trades* (London, 1747), p. 20.

Plausible reasons why coppersmiths were singled out for particular attention can be deduced from the nature of their materials, tools and methods. The historical development of their trade also hints at reasons for their stigmatism. Copper was generally beaten when cold and offers greater resistance than the other metals which were also beaten cold (gold, silver and tin), and therefore needed to be hammered more vigorously and for protracted periods.[71] This solidity would result in high-pitched notes when struck with iron hammers (iron being a harder substance than copper) and the hollowness of the vessels produced in coppersmithery would have amplified the hammer blows.[72] Although the compiler of *A General Description of All Trades* (1747) did not make any mention of the sounds of the coppersmith, he did describe those of the anchor-smith, a craft which would have been located in coastal areas. Anchor-smithery was described as laborious work;

> being little else but blowing and tending a vast Fire, and striking with large Sledge-hammers; though in doing this they have a Slight, and a clever Knack of following one another's Strokes, in such a Manner that they seem to keep time, the Noise of which at some Distance, sounds as if they were beating Changes, there being often six, eight, or ten of them striking at one Anchor.[73]

The coppersmith (working alone) would not have been able to produce such a seemingly musical and rhythmical sound. The Italian physician Bernardino Ramazzini, in his comprehensive treatise on occupational diseases, included coppersmiths in a supplement to the 1713 edition of his work. Highlighting the incessant noise of their trade, Ramazzini noted that coppersmiths

---

[71] Francis Bacon identified the discovery of whether hot or cold brass sounds loudest when struck with a hammer as a future line of enquiry in 'The History and First Inquisition of Sound and Hearing', trans. in Basil Montagu (ed.), *The Works of Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England*, 16 vols (London, 1825-36), XV, p. 233.
[72] W. C. Roberts-Austen, *An Introduction to the Study of Metallurgy*, 5th edn (London, 1902), p. 18.
[73] *A General Description of all Trades* (London, 1747), p. 20.

> are engaged all day in hammering copper to make it ductile so that they may manufacture vessels of various kinds. From this quarter there rises such a terrible din that only these workers have homes and shops there [a district of Venice]; all others flee from that highly disagreeable locality. One may observe these men ... while all day long they beat the newly minted copper, first with wooden then with iron hammers till it is as ductile as required. To begin with, the ears are injured by that perpetual din ... so that workers of this class become hard of hearing, and, if they grow old at this work, completely deaf.[74]

Although the craft of the coppersmith was not a new one to England, the numbers of workers in this field did increase rapidly during the early modern period, especially after the late-sixteenth century.[75] From the second half of the seventeenth century, rapid increases in the home production of copper goods soon reduced imports to 'negligible dimensions' and during the eighteenth century the home demand for copper increased greatly.[76] Xenophobia might have played a part in the initial dissatisfaction of inhabitants towards the sounds of this burgeoning craft, as many of the braziers and coppersmiths of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were foreigners. In 1575 coppersmiths migrated from Germany, and they soon helped to develop an extensive trade.[77] It is possible that craftsmen new to the trade would have needed to inveigle themselves into areas unfamiliar with the sound of coppersmithery, where inhabitants might have been more likely to take umbrage at it. Coppersmiths did not seem to group together in the way that goldsmiths did; they probably lacked the need for security in numbers associated with the more valuable products made by the goldsmiths. Most

---

[74] Bernardino Ramazzini, *De Morbis Artificum [diseases of workers]*(1713), ed. and trans. by Wilmer Cave Wright (Chicago, 1940), p. 437.
[75] Hatcher and Barker estimate that in the seventeenth century there were about a dozen free coppersmiths in the Pewterers' Company, *A History of British Pewter*, p. 272; Nine master coppersmiths signed a petition of 14 February 1615 London, GL, MS 7090/4; C. Welch, *History of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers of the City of London*, 2 vols (London, 1902), II, p. 117.
[76] Hamilton, *English Brass and Copper Industries*, pp. 279, 290; Daniel Defoe, *A Plan of the English Commerce. Being a compleat prospect of the trade of this nation, as well the home trade as the foreign* (London, 1728) pp. 290-1.
[77] Hamilton, *English Brass and Copper Industries*, pp. 88, 288-9.

> are engaged all day in hammering copper to make it ductile so that they may manufacture vessels of various kinds. From this quarter there rises such a terrible din that only these workers have homes and shops there [a district of Venice]; all others flee from that highly disagreeable locality. One may observe these men ... while all day long they beat the newly minted copper, first with wooden then with iron hammers till it is as ductile as required. To begin with, the ears are injured by that perpetual din ... so that workers of this class become hard of hearing, and, if they grow old at this work, completely deaf.[74]

Although the craft of the coppersmith was not a new one to England, the numbers of workers in this field did increase rapidly during the early modern period, especially after the late-sixteenth century.[75] From the second half of the seventeenth century, rapid increases in the home production of copper goods soon reduced imports to 'negligible dimensions' and during the eighteenth century the home demand for copper increased greatly.[76] Xenophobia might have played a part in the initial dissatisfaction of inhabitants towards the sounds of this burgeoning craft, as many of the braziers and coppersmiths of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were foreigners. In 1575 coppersmiths migrated from Germany, and they soon helped to develop an extensive trade.[77] It is possible that craftsmen new to the trade would have needed to inveigle themselves into areas unfamiliar with the sound of coppersmithery, where inhabitants might have been more likely to take umbrage at it. Coppersmiths did not seem to group together in the way that goldsmiths did; they probably lacked the need for security in numbers associated with the more valuable products made by the goldsmiths. Most

---

[74] Bernardino Ramazzini, *De Morbis Artificum [diseases of workers]*(1713), ed. and trans. by Wilmer Cave Wright (Chicago, 1940), p. 437.
[75] Hatcher and Barker estimate that in the seventeenth century there were about a dozen free coppersmiths in the Pewterers' Company, *A History of British Pewter*, p. 272; Nine master coppersmiths signed a petition of 14 February 1615 London, GL, MS 7090/4; C. Welch, *History of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers of the City of London*, 2 vols (London, 1902), II, p. 117.
[76] Hamilton, *English Brass and Copper Industries*, pp. 279, 290; Daniel Defoe, *A Plan of the English Commerce. Being a compleat prospect of the trade of this nation, as well the home trade as the foreign* (London, 1728) pp. 290-1.
[77] Hamilton, *English Brass and Copper Industries*, pp. 88, 288-9.

coppersmiths might, therefore, have had neighbours who were not in the same trade and such wide dispersal might have increased their unpopularity.

The processes of building construction would have produced sounds with the potential to disturb entire neighbourhoods, but for limited periods because daylight limited hours of work. The subcommittee of the city and company of mercers, the men in control of the Royal Exchange, dealt with a complaint in 1674 from the tenants of a shop on the north side of the Exchange where masons building St Bartholomew's Church were sawing stones 'to their [the tenants] greate p[re]judice, because the Dust Spoyles Some of their Comodities, and the Noyse offends all'.[78] Craftsmen working in other construction trades, such as the paviors, might have also found themselves the centre of conflict, but it is likely that those affected would have been appeased by the knowledge that the disruption was temporary and necessary.

The street hawkers of London who advertised their goods and services with sounds frequently appear in descriptions of early modern street noise. In order to sound above the din of rattling coaches and the clamour of their business rivals, the criers would have needed to keep the volume high.[79] William King, in his *Art of Cookery* (1708) described the cries of London as a 'hideous din'.[80] As they varied their shouts to draw attention to themselves, words degenerated into sounds, and many listeners probably distinguished one slurred yell from another on this basis.[81]

---

[78] London, Mercers' Comany Archive, Gresham Repertory 1669-1676, p. 155. Their response was to let the stones already there be sawn, but none thereafter. My thanks to Natasha Glaisyer for this reference. See also the case of a stone mason presented to the wardmote of Vintry Ward in 1716, London, GL, MS 68, Vintry Ward. Wardmote Inquest Minutes 1687-1774, fol. 79v. He was again presented for the same nuisance in 1718, fol. 84v.

[79] *The Tatler*, no. 9 [Steele] April 1709; *The Spectator*, no. 376 [Steele], 12 May 1712; Jonathan Swift, 'A Description of the Morning', in Pat Rogers (ed.), *Jonathan Swift. The Complete Poems* (London, 1983), p. 107.

[80] William King, *The Art of Cookery* (1708), cited in William H. Irving, *John Gay's London, illustarted from the poetry of the time* (Cambridge, Mass., 1928), p. 156.

[81] Sean Shesgreen (ed.), *The Criers and Hawkers of London, Engravings and Drawings by Marcellus Laroon* (Aldershot, 1990), pp. 36-8.

Milk, explained Joseph Addison, was sold in shrill sounds and one milk-seller became infamous for her inarticulate scream.[82] According to Addison a lack of clarity often led to confusion:

> I have sometimes seen a Country Boy run out to buy Apples of a Bellows-mender, and Ginger-bread from a Grinder of Knives and Scissars. Nay, so strangely infatuated are some very eminent Artists of this particular Grace in a Cry, that none but their Acquaintance are able to guess at their Profession...[83]

Criers who touted infrequently because they purveyed seasonal goods or whose cries were harmonious, enjoyed greater popularity.[84] Comparing it to the 'Song of Nightingales', 'Ralph Crotchett' regretted in *The Spectator* that the cry of the dill and cucumber sellers was only heard for two months. Cabbages were sold all the year round and Jonathan Swift moaned 'Here is a restless dog crying cabbages and Savoys, plagues me mightily every morning about this time. He is at it now. I wish his largest cabbage was sticking in his throat.'[85] *The Spectator's* 'Ralph Crotchett' did not appreciate the 'excessive Alarms' of the Turnip sellers which he regarded as unnecessary as their wares were in no danger of cooling. He asked that criers 'take care in particular that those may not make the most Noise, who have the least to sell, which is very observable in the Vendors of Card-matches to whom I cannot but apply that old Proverb of Much Cry but little Wool.'[86] Those who cried loudest were perhaps those most desperate to sell. Marcellus Laroon published a series of engravings entitled *The Cries of the City of London Drawn after the Life* in 1711, which illustrated over fifty of London's street sellers and of these, six can be identified as having a very bad reputation for

---

[82] *The Spectator*, no. 251 [Addison], 18 December 1711; Francis Grose, *The Olio: Being a Collection of Essays etc.* (London, 1792), p. 210.
[83] *The Spectator*, no. 251 [Addison], 18 December 1711.
[84] Shesgreen (ed.), *The Criers and Hawkers of London,* pp. 128-9
[85] *The Spectator*, no. 251 [Addison], 18 December 1711; Jonathan Swift, *Journal to Stella* (covers the years 1710-13) ed. H. Williams, 2 vols (Oxford, 1974), I, p. 581 (13 December 1712).
[86] *The Spectator*, no. 251 [Addison], 18 December 1711.

noisiness.[87] Although only a seventh of all Laroon's criers were in service trades, half of the noisy criers were, and the other characteristically noisy criers sold very small items at low profit. When the criers are divided into categories of poverty, assessed using Laroon's illustrations and other contemporary details, although a quarter of all criers fall into the poorest category, two thirds of those with a noisy reputation do. Generally, it seemed that the poorer you were, the more noise you generated, and the deeper your alienation and stigmatisation became.

Often regarded as beggars, tinkers were the poorest of all hawkers and they were also thought to be especially noisy.[88] In the mid-seventeenth century a poet implied that of all the bells of Oxford only Great Tom 'outrung a tinker and his kettle', and in the mid-eighteenth century one author remarked that a tinker makes 'more noise than Work'.[89] A letter in *The Spectator* explained that tinkers had 'the Privillege of disturbing a whole street for an Hour together, with the Twancking of a brass Kettle or Frying pan'.[90] Before licensing was introduced in 1697, there were no laws governing vocal criers, and without direct recourse to law, the authorities might have manipulated vagrancy laws to silence them.[91] Tinker Anthony Sanders of St Giles-Without-Cripplegate was convicted in March 1685 as an 'idle and vagrant person' despite the account that he was discovered crying in a

---

[87] These are the tinker, the knife-sharpener, the sow gelder, the card match seller, the hobby horse seller, and the small coals man. Reputation was gauged from accounts in *The Spectator*, with Marcellus Laroon's engravings, accompanied by Sean Shesgreen's descriptions, as well as Hogarth's art; three the hawkers listed above appear in *The Enraged Musician*, see fig 11.

[88] A.L. Beier, *Masterless Men. The Vagrancy Problem in England 1560-1640* (London, 1985), pp. 90-1. Thomas Overbury remarked that 'if he scape Tyburn and Banbury, he dies a beggar', Thomas Overbury, *Characters* (1614), repr. ed. by W.J. Paylor, *The Overburian Characters. To which is added A Wife*, Percy Reprints, 13 (Oxford, 1936), pp. 34-5.

[89] Richard Corbet, 'On Great Tom of Christ Church' (1647), J.A.W. Bennett and H.R. Trevor-Roper (eds), *The Poems of Richard Corbett* (Oxford, 1955), p. 79; *A New Tale of an Old Tub, or the Way to Fame* (1752), cited in Irving, *John Gay's London*, p. 159. See also E.B. [Edward Bysshe?] *A Trip to North Wales* (London, 1701), in H. William Troyer (ed.), *Five travels scripts commonly attributed to Edward Ward* (New York, 1933), pp. 11-12.

[90] *The Spectator*, no. 251 [Addison], 18 December 1711.

[91] For details see Danby Pickering, *The Statutes at Large*, 42 vols (Cambridge, 1762-99), X, p. 168 'An act for licensing hawkers and pedlars' (1697).

fig. 9, Marcellus Laroon, *Knives or Cisers to Grinde* [Knife-grinder] (1688)

loud voice 'Have you any worke for a tinker?'[92] A vagrant was one who lacked land or master and who worked at no recognised trade, yet Sanders clearly seemed to be working as a tinker.[93] Was his conviction the result of beggarly conduct, or because his trade was noisy? The sound of the knife-sharpeners' cry and the piercing shriek of his wheel must have made him another of the city's most reviled vendors. Francis Bacon describes knife-sharpening as a 'skreeching noise', which makes 'a shivering or horror in the body' and sets the teeth on edge.[94] Richard Hookam was arrested in February 1685 for wandering around carrying a wooden cart and a rotary wheel, crying 'Have you any knives to grind?', an action which the Middlesex sessions jurors interpreted as a ploy to disguise his vagrancy and escape punishment for that crime.[95] After a glance at the images of knife-grinders in both Laroon's engraving (fig. 9) and Hogarth's print of 'The Enraged Musician', (fig. 11) it seems unlikely that someone would push such a cumbersome wheel for no purpose other than to disguise his vagrancy.

The noise of the traffic was a common cause for comment from metropolitan visitors and inhabitants alike, especially the sounds made by hackney coaches and by the wheels of carts. A letter in The Spectator suggested that in order to secure enough quiet to be able to study in the eighteenth century a Londoner would have needed to take lodgings 'in a very narrow Street', in order to avoid the noise of coaches and chairmen.[96] To avoid hindrance to traders and citizens, and to improve the safety of pedestrians and other road users, bylaws

---

[92] Jeaffreson (ed.), *Middlesex County Records*, IV, p. 285.
[93] R. B. Manning, *Village revolts, social protest and popular disturbances in England, 1509-1640* (Oxford, 1988), p. 159.
[94] Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum* (1627), in Bacon, *Works*, II, p. 561 (Century VII, 700).
[95] London, LMA, MJ/SR/1663, ind. 19; also MJ/SBB/424, Sessions of the Peace Register, 1684-5, fol. 51; Jeaffreson (ed.), *Middlesex County Records*, IV, pp. 283-4.
[96] *The Spectator*, no. 175 [Budgell], 20 September 1711. In Jonson's *Epicoene*, Clerimont informs the audience that Morose has chosen to live in a narrow street which will not accommodate 'coaches nor carts nor any of these common noises', I, i, 158-62.

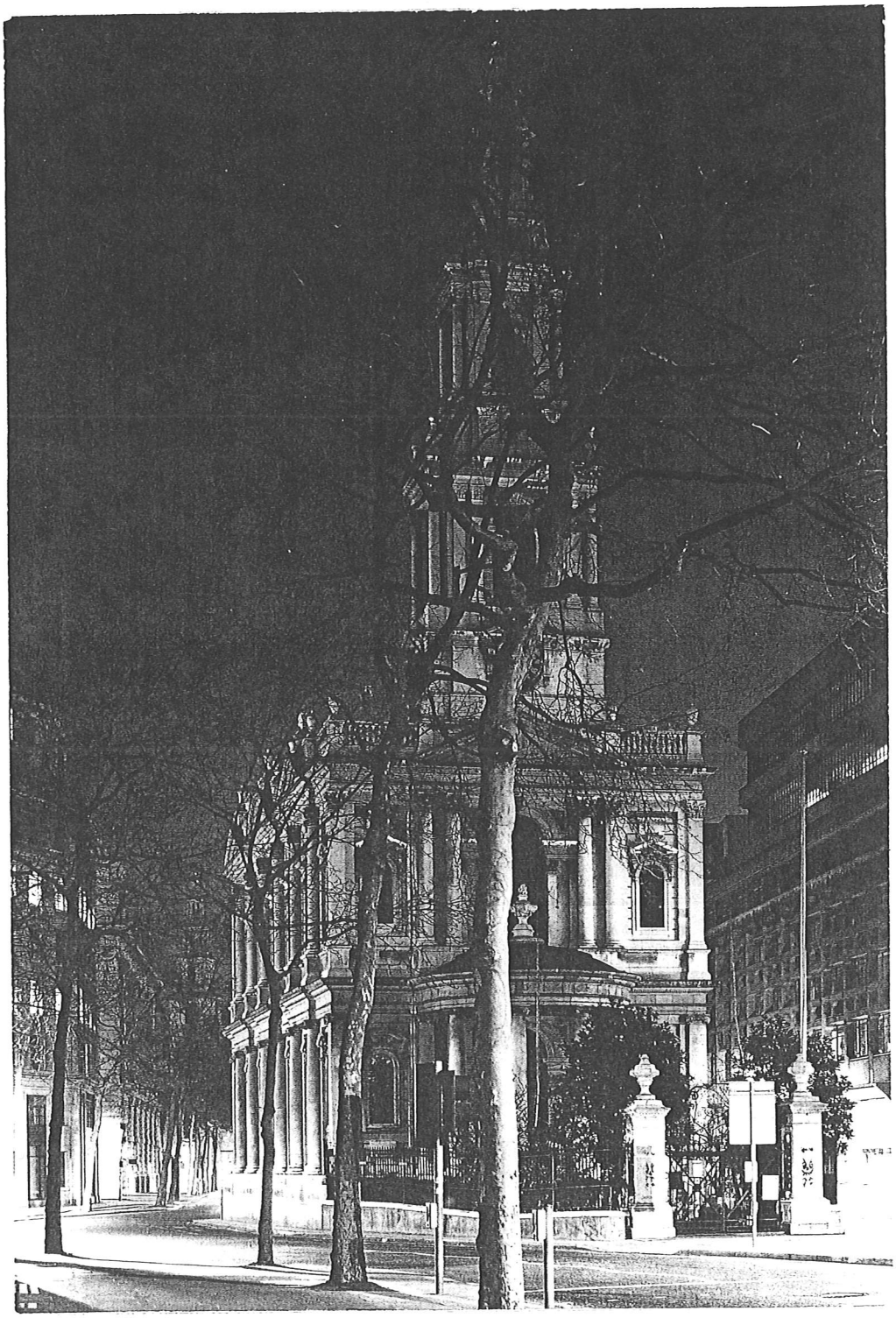
restricted the numbers and permitted hours of use for hackney coaches and carts.[97] An Act of the Common Council (1586) confirmed an earlier court decree of 1582 and set down regulations for London's transport. Fines were fixed for any coach or cart ' heard to Creake of Pype for drines and want of greasinge of the Nave.'[98] This rule was probably not created to limit noise, but to ensure that coaches and carts were well-maintained, yet it would have limited sounds if enforced.

When his character Sloth tries to enter London, Thomas Dekker notes that there is no where to sleep soundly in the afternoon; 'for in every street, carts and Coaches make such a thundring as if the world ranne upon wheeles ... how then can Idlenes thinke to inhabit heere?'[99] The sheer multitude of coaches was a common cause for comment in letters, travel accounts, diaries and civic records. Chaplain Horatio Busino, a visitor to London in 1618, described the coaches and carts he saw and heard in London; 'there is such a multitude of them, both large and small, that is to say in two wheels or on four, that it would be impossible to estimate them correctly.'[100] Traffic increased during the period. Members of various livery companies petitioned the aldermen to restrain the multitude of stage coaches in 1671, and this petition was approved at a meeting of the Court of Aldermen.[101] The inhabitants of Cornhill Ward, affected by traffic coming to and going from the Royal Exchange, frequently called for hackney coachmen to be presented to the wardmote inquest.[102]

---

[97] *Lawes of the Market*, nos 6 and 42.
[98] E. Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen of London* (London, 1982), p. 26.
[99] Thomas Dekker, *Seven The Seven deadlie Sinns of London: Drawne in seven severall Coaches, Through the seven severall Gates of the Citie. Bringing the plague with them* (1606), ed. H.F.B. Brett-Smith (Oxford, 1922), p. 38.
[100] Peter Razzell (ed.), *The journals of two travellers in Elizabethan and early Stuart England. Thomas Platter and Horatio Busino* (London, 1995), p. 155.
[101] London, CRLO, Rep. 78, fol. 3.
[102] London, GL MS 4069/1-3 Cornhill Wardmote Inquest Minute Books, 1571-1800, various. The rules determining the numbers and use of hackney coaches are included in *A View of the Penal Laws Concerning Trade and Trafick*, pp. 44-6.

fig. 10 The Church of St-Mary-le-Strand, Westminster, James Gibbs (1714)



Sometimes street sounds presented problems for those hoping to hear judicial business, or the minister in church. James Gibbs, architect of the church of St Mary-le-Strand, realised that 'being situated in a very public place' the church would be surrounded by the tumultuous traffic of London's eighteenth century streets. To combat this, he designed the ground floor without windows 'to keep out the Noises from the Street.'[103] (See fig. 10) By the mid-eighteenth century London was not the only city experiencing a traffic crisis. The Sessions House in Chelmsford was located in the marketplace and as a consequence it was common for the assize judges to be forced to halt proceedings because the words of witnesses and counsel could not be discerned above the noises of carts and carriages outside.[104]

The maddest, loudest town in the world

The majority of the cases presented in this chapter concern urban settlements. In part this reflects the bias towards urban, and especially London, records as the basis of research. The decision to focus upon urban sounds was not arbitrary; there was a greater potential for noise in large cities where population densities were high. There is also a bias towards the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which is especially evident in the most evocative accounts of London, the diaries, autobiographies, travel accounts, novels, vignettes and essays. It is probable that the noise of city life became less tolerable during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This assertion is difficult to prove because each generation can only draw on its own experiences, and cannot compare them directly to those

---

[103] James Gibbs, *Book of Architecture containing designs of buildings and ornaments*, 2nd edn (London. 1728), p. vi, plates XVI-XXI.
[104] D. H. Allen (ed), *Essex Quarter Sessions Order Book, 1652-1661*, Essex County Council Record Office Publications, 65 (Chelmsford, 1974), p. xvi.

of previous generations. However, as the trade in the capital expanded, so did the population, and both developments would have increased opportunities for noise.

By the mid-sixteenth century, London was a wealthy, bustling and expanding city. Thomas Platter, visiting London at the end of the sixteenth century, noted that it was 'so populous ... that one simply cannot walk along the streets for the crowd.'[105] As infrastructure development could not keep pace with the ever growing population, London was crowded, filthy and noisy.[106] However, many commentators enjoyed the bustling environment and, when describing the sounds of St Paul's Walk in 1627, John Earle did not seem to be disquieted by them, but seemed to revel in the atmosphere.[107] On comparing London to Paris in the mid-seventeenth century, John Evelyn noted that what London lacked in houses and palaces it made up for in shops and taverns 'which render it so open by day, and cheerfull in the night', and remarked that 'as *mad* and lowd a *Town*, is no where to be found in the whole world.'[108] Neither Evelyn nor Earle seemed discomfited by their urban experiences.

However, there was a subtle shift in attitudes during the ~~end of the~~ late seventeenth century. Whereas previously most comments about London's noise were made by visitors from other parts of the country, or from other countries, Londoners were starting to mumble about the noise of their city. After the last decades of the seventeenth century the noise and bustle did not seem to please people as it had pleased Evelyn and Earle. An attractive feature of Mrs Packer's lodgings in Crooked Lane, according to her advertisement in a late-seventeenth century trade paper, was the 'freedom from Noise' one would enjoy there.[109] This

---

105 *Evelyn*, IV, p. 382 (12 June 1684); Clare Williams (ed.), *Thomas Platter's Travels in England 1599* (London, 1937), p. 174.
106 Power, 'East London Working Community', p. 103.
107 Earle, *Microscosmographie, Autograph edition*, pp. 142-5.
108 *Evelyn*, III, p. 638.
109 John Houghton, *A Collection For Improvement of Husbandry and Trade*, IV, no. 95, 25 May 1694. My thanks to Natasha Glaisyer for this reference.

heightened sensitivity might be attributable to the swelling population, but it might also have been influenced by other factors; namely, the psychological effects of the plague and the fire, and massive suburban growth. These possible factors are explored in some detail below.

The mid-seventeenth century was a period of dramatic change in the capital. Epidemics of the plague caused temporarily depopulated streets and during one of the worst of these, in August 1665, the Reverend Thomas Vincent preached that:

> Now shops are shut, people rare and very few that walk about, insomuch that the grass begins to spring up in some places; there is a deep silence in every street, especially within the walls. No prancing horses, no rattling coaches, no calling on customers nor offering wares, no London cries sounding in the ears. If any voice be heard it is the groans of dying persons breathing forth their last, and the funeral knells of them that are ready to be carried to their graves...[110]

Both Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn remarked about the changes to street life caused by this epidemic. On 8th August 1665, Pepys wrote with dismay that the streets of London were 'mighty empty'.[111] A month later, Evelyn described London and the suburbs from Kent Street to St James's as 'a dismal passage & dangerous, to see so many Cofines exposed in the streetes & the streete thin of people, the shops shut up, & all in mournefull silence'.[112] The following month Pepys found that although the Exchange was 'pretty full', the streets were very empty and the shops were shut.[113]

Dogs were regarded as carriers of the plague, and this association led to the abandonment of many swelling the ranks of hungry, howling strays. Diarist Henry Machyn had recorded in August 1563 that there was 'a-nodur proclamassyon

---

[110] Thomas Vincent 'God's Terrible voice to the City' (August 1665), cited in W. Besant, *London in the Time of the Stuarts* (London, 1903), p. 22.
[111] *Pepys*, VI, p. 186 (8 August 1665).
[112] *Evelyn*, III, pp. 417-8 (7 September 1665).
[113] *Pepys*, VI, p. 282 (29 October 1665).

[from] my lord mare that ther ys on[e] man hyred [to kill] doges as many as he can fynd in the stretts'.[114] In 1592 loose dogs that howled and annoyed neighbours during the day, even if kept indoors, were ordered to be destroyed.[115] Such measures were also adopted during the epidemic of 1665. Daniel Defoe estimated that an extraordinary forty-thousand dogs were slaughtered during the 1665 epidemic. Although his figure seems a little wild, it does suggest that many dogs were killed, thus reducing the numbers of howling strays on the streets.[116]

In London, the 1665-6 plague was punctuated by conflagration and this disaster would have further silenced the city. Additionally, measures to avoid a repetition of the disaster led to the abandonment of timber for the construction of buildings.[117] The Act for the Rebuilding of the City of London (1667) brought about standardisation in metropolitan house-building by dictating both materials and wall thickness. London was rebuilt in brick, tile and glass. This must have had some implications for the levels of noise disturbance experienced by the citizens. A proclamation of 13th September called not only for a rebuilding in brick, but a widening of alleys and secondary lanes.[118] As a consequence, noise disturbance would have been further reduced as a result of the distancing of neighbours and neighbourhoods.

---

[114] John Gough Nichols (ed.), *The Diary of Henry Machyn, citizen and merchant-taylor of London, from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563.* The Camden Society, old ser., 42 (London, 1848), p. 312 (4 August 1563). See also Mark Jenner, 'The Great Dog Massacre', in W. Naphy and P. Roberts (eds), *Fear in Early Modern Society* (Manchester, 1997), p. 48; Frank Percy Wilson, *The Plague in Shakespeare's London* (Oxford, 1927), p. 38; London, CLRO, Jour. 20 (2), fol. 430.

[115] London, CRLO, Jour. 23, fol. 130v. In June 1603 Robert Wallis of the parish of St Margaret's, Westminster received one penny for each of the five-hundred-and-two dogs he killed, in John Charles Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts from the fourteenth century to the close of the seventeenth century* (London, 1913), p. 317.

[116] Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), ed. by A. Burgess and C. Bristow (London, 1966), p. 136.

[117] C.F. Innocent, *The Development of English Building Construction* (Cambridge, 1916), p. 150.

[118] Although this act was not the first to be concerned with wall thickness it was the most far-reaching, C.C. Knowles and P. H. Pitt, *The History of Building Regulation in London 1189-1972* (London, 1972), pp. 20-33.

London's suburbs burgeoned during the early modern period. Michael Power, remarking that London 'outgrew its rivals by a spectacular margin', estimated that whereas in 1600 there were approximately 185,000 citizens, with over half of these dwelling in the central city, by the late-seventeenth century there were approximately 435,000 citizens, the majority of whom dwelt in the suburbs.[119] This represents a huge swelling of the suburban population. The increased segregation of living and working spaces, and improvements in house construction would have allowed more people to retreat to quiet rooms and to escape noise with greater ease than ever before. These factors could have led to a heightened sensitivity towards noise; where noise was encountered it would have been less familiar and more noticeable. When the city's streets were repopulated after the double disaster of pestilence and fire, the bustle and commotion might have gained emphasis through juxtaposition with a previously quiet state.[120] Indeed, in an expanding London, which serviced greater numbers of inhabitants and became more busy, the opportunities for this noise increased; there was more people, more trade and more traffic.

The apparent change of mood in the last half of the seventeenth century was cemented in the eighteenth century.[121] The dissatisfaction with urban noise (especially London's noise) is evident in Gay's poem *Rural Sports* (first published 1713);

---

[119] Power, 'The East London Working Community' p. 103. See also Roger Finlay and Beatrice Shearer, 'Population growth and suburban expansion' in A.L. Beier and Roger Finlay (eds), *London 1500-1700, the making of the metropolis* (London, 1986), p. 38.

[120] Cynthia Wall argues that disasters such as conflagration disturb and dislocate patterns and structures of life, *Literary and Cultural Spaces*, pp. 5-6, 189.

[121] H. George Hahn, 'Country Myth and the Politics of the Early Georgian Novel', in H. George Hahn (ed.), *The Country Myth: motifs in the British novel from Defoe to Smollett* (Frankfurt,1990), pp. 16-17; see also Jeffrey L. Duncan, 'The Rural Ideal in Eighteenth-Century Fiction' in the same volume.

I Have long been in the noisie Town immur'd
Respir'd its Smoak, and all it's Toils endur'd.[122]

Disapproval of crowded noisy cities seemed to be common during the eighteenth century. Upon arriving in London in November 1762 Boswell remarked that the 'noise, the crowd, the glare of the shops and signs agreeably confused me', but by April 1763 he was finding the Temple, where he was a student, 'a most agreeable place' because it was away from the hustle and bustle of Fleet Street and the Strand.[123] In the intervening five months Boswell seems to have tired of some aspects of city life. Before the mid-seventeenth century the city seemed to excite and energise the citizen, but it now appeared to irritate and fatigue.

The clamour of mid-eighteenth century London was illustrated by William Hogarth in *The Enraged Musician* (1741). (fig. 11) This image depicts urban disorder and disharmony. The musician cannot work, distracted by noise he covers his ears. Hogarth biographer Jenny Uglow notes that 'Everything that can make a noise seems to be here', and describes the scene as 'rapid noise.'[124] A parrot caws beside a bill-poster for Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. Beneath the parrot a female ballad-seller, with crying babe-in-arms sings *Lady's Fall*, a cheerless ballad.[125] A girl, rattle in hand, watches the young boy as he urinates into a hole. Close by the piper plays his instrument and a boy demonically beats his drum, while a dog yelps at the sound of the grindstone. The knife-sharpener is not the only street worker depicted, for a dustman ringing his bell, and a sow gelder, astride his horse and blowing his horn also feature. The 'small coals' seller bawls off to the right and a pavior bashes the pavement.[126] Henry Fielding exclaimed that this engraving was

---

[122] John Gay, *Rural Sports: a Poem* (London, 1713), lines 11-12.
[123] *Boswell's London Journal*, p. 51 (19 November 1762); p. 217 (6 April 1763).
[124] Jenny Uglow, *Hogarth. A Life and A World* (London, 1997), pp. 300-2.
[125] L. Jenkins, 'Childs play', *Early Music Today*, 5 (1997), 5-6, p. 6.
[126] Uglow, *Hogarth*, p. 300.

fig. 11, William Hogarth, *The Enraged Musician* (1741).

'enough to make a man deaf to look at'.[127] Apart from illustrating the noises of the moment, Hogarth also skilfully shows the latent potential for noise. The urinating boy, when he is spent, will make another sound as the object (possibly a school slate) attached to his waist by rope is dragged along the ground. The flag on the church shows that the bells will ring that day. The sign on the wall to the right reads 'John Long, Pewterer', a notoriously noisy metal hammering trade.

Uglow describes this print as 'curiously ambivalent', because whereas Hogarth appears to sympathise with the musician's plight, he is also criticising his arrogance. Why are his sounds more valuable than those around him? The musician cannot create harmony in the midst of the disharmonious plebeians.[128] He tries to make order by quietening them, and by covering his ears, but this provides no solace. The poised milkmaid, the central figure, is also depicted with an open mouth, but her beauty and grace form a contrast with the other sound-makers. The milkmaid's implied sweet sounds highlight both the artificiality of the musician's music and the noise of her companions.

If London's citizens were muttering about the noise of their city in their diaries, if artists and literati were portraying London as distractingly noisy; did this dissatisfaction manifest itself in an increase in official complaints about noise? The answer to this question is no, and the possible reasons for this will be discussed after an account of legal redress available to people afflicted by noise in the early modern period.

---

[127] Henry Fielding, *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* (1755), in Ian A. Bell and Andrew Varney (eds), *Henry Fielding. A Journey from this World to the Next and The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* (Oxford, 1997), p. 142.

[128] Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1992-4), II, p. 114, the notes on the musician's score are harmonic.

Noise: A Public and a Private Nuisance

Jonson's Morose dramatises the fact that personal boundaries of tolerability to noise were not uniform in early modern England. However, to create laws to deal with noise as a nuisance requires consensual thresholds of tolerability to be agreed. The subjectivity of the sound / noise distinction creates a legal dilemma; who determines what is noise? Lord Selborne, presiding over a case brought to trial in 1872 involving the noise and vibrations of a steam engine in a mill, stressed that the court should be careful in such cases to avoid being unfairly swayed into making too harsh a judgement by a hypersensitive plaintiff. He warned that

> ... a nervous, or anxious, or prepossessed listener hears sounds which would otherwise have passed unnoticed, and magnifies and exaggerates into some new significance, originating within himself, sounds which at other times would have been passively heard and not regarded.[129]

Although this case post-dates the end of the period under consideration here, Lord Selborne's caveat is an important one to bear in mind when trying to assess differing susceptibilities to noise, and when considering definitions of acceptable noise.

Modern noise theorists Dylan Jones and Anthony Chapman have noted that the pitch of some sounds make them more likely to be regarded as noise, but that 'in the final analysis it is the social (and in turn political) context which deems them acceptable.'[130] Although this inherent problem in drafting laws to deal with noise was not coherently addressed in the early modern period, people afflicted by noise could seek redress from a variety of bodies. Legal historian J.H. Baker has detected growing contemporary speculation about the scope of action on nuisance, 'particularly with respect to nuisances affecting the senses. Already by Tudor times the law recognised that nuisances could be occasioned by noise, heat and

---

[129] *Gaunt vs Fynney* (1872), R.A. Buckley, *The Law of Nuisance*, 2nd edn (London, 1996), p. 72.
[130] Dylan M.Jones and Anthony J. Chapman (eds), *Noise and Society* (Chichester, 1984), p. 3.

smell.' However, he notes, not every inconvenience could be the subject of legal redress and the need to weigh up the rights and freedom of all parties was recognised.[131]

Communities afflicted by protracted noise could petition the authorities and argue that the noise was a public nuisance. William Blackstone described common or public nuisance as signifying 'any thing that worketh hurt, inconvenience, or damage' to all the king's subjects.[132] Public nuisances indictable under common law that might involve the production of noise, in addition to the street disorders and alehouses mentioned above, included: the use of a speaking trumpet, the keeping of a disorderly house (because of the temptations they presented and their drawing together of noisy crowds), and playhouses (because coaches and people gathered nearby to the inconvenience of the 'Places adjacent').[133] In 1744 parishioners from St James, Clerkenwell, called for action to be taken against the keepers of disorderly houses in that parish; namely Old Sadlers Wells, New Wells, Lord Cobham's and Sir John Oldcastle's. The petitioners claimed that each establishment was capable of holding up to five hundred customers. The petitioners pointed out that they sometimes remained open until four o'clock in the morning and when they left patrons 'frequently assembled in bodies, hallowing and knocking on doors, ringing bells and singing obscene songs.' This, it was claimed, led to the disquiet and danger of the petitioners in particular and the public in general.[134]

---

131 J.H. Baker, *An Introduction to English Legal History*, 2nd edn (London, 1979), pp. 357-60.
132 William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4th edn, 4 vols (Oxford, 1769-70), Book III, p. 216.
133 *R. v. Smith* (1725), in Sir John Strange, *Reports of Adjudged Cases in Courts of Chancery, King's Bench, Common Pleas and Exchequer*, 2 vols (London, 1755), I, p. 704; William Hawkins, *A Treatise of the Pleas of the Crown; or a system of the principal matters relating to that subject digested under their proper heads*, 2 vols (London, 1724-6), I, p. 198.
134 London, LMA, MJ/OC, Middlesex Orders of Court, V, fols 38r-v (1744). See also London, GL, MS 4069/2, Cornhill Wardmote Inquest 1652-1733, fol. 1384. (1691); London, LMA, MJ/OC Orders of Court , II, fols 85v-86 (1730).

A nuisance which affected private individuals was described by Blackstone as 'anything done to the hurt or annoyance of the lands, tenements, or hereditaments of another'.[135] Such annoyances to the interests of particular individuals were not punishable by public prosecution as common nuisance, but had to be made the subject of a private action by the aggrieved party.[136] A plaintiff would argue in such a case that damage had occurred to himself or to his property, but whether or not 'damage' would be occasioned by noise was a moot point. In 'Jeffrey's Case' (c.1560), John Jeffrey had let out a room of his London house to a schoolmaster, but found that the sounds distracted him in his study, which was immediately above the school-room. When it was judged to be lawful to keep a school anywhere, he moved his study to another room in his house.[137] Blackstone described the jurisdiction of King's Bench as 'very high and transcendent', and several cases involving noise nuisance were heard there during the early modern period.[138]

Although there were legal remedies for some noises, noise was afforded a relatively low priority by the authorities.[139] When cases involving noise nuisance were presented to the authorities by petitioning neighbours, the key issue was frequently not noise; it was only one of several causes of complaint. In the case on page 240 (above), for example, the central focus is the noisome dog carcasses and

---

135 Blackstone, *Commentaries*, III p. 216.

136 Hawkins, *A Treatise of the Pleas of the Crown*, p. 197 'Common Nusances'; J.H. Baker and S.F.C Milsom, *Sources of English Legal History. Private Law to 1750* (London, 1986), p. 586, *Inner Temple Moot* (c.1494)- John Vavasour, serjeant at law in 1478, concerning the noise of hammers: 'where a smith sets up a forge, the sound of the hammer-blows is a nuisance and discomfort to the person, but not to the freehold; and for this reason no assize lies, but an action on the case.'

137 *Jeffrey's Case* (c.1560), Baker and Milsom, *Sources of English Legal History* p. 592.

138 Blackstone, *Commentaries*, III, p. 42; For nusiance cases see: *Keeble v. Hickersgill* (1706), in E. Hyde East, *Reports of Cases argued and determined in the Court of King's Bench*, 16 vols (London, 1801-14), XI, p. 574; *R.v. Higginson* (1762), in Sir James Burrow, *Reports of Cases Adjudged in the Court of King's Bench*, 3rd edn, 5 vols (Dublin, 1784-5), II, pp. 1232-3.

139 Jacques Attali makes an interesting assertion in his *Noise. The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi, Theory and History of Literature, 16 (Manchester, 1977), p. 122, where he remarks that 'It is possible to judge the strength of a political power by its legislation on noise and the effectiveness of its control over it'.

blood. It is possible that while the petitioners were most concerned about the noises of establishments, such as those disturbed by the unruly clients of Old Sadlers (above, page 263) they stressed the lewd and corrupting nature of the clientele rather than the disturbance of noise, as this would be more persuasive with the authorities who wished to tighten moral standards. The petitioners might simply have learnt which arguments to stress in order to secure action.

Noise was not as rigorously controlled as hygiene. Although wardmote inquest minutes are littered with references to dumping carcasses in ditches, failure to clear dunghills and throwing 'soyles' on the pavement, noise is rarely mentioned. Piles of filth and decaying animals created a more lingering and permanent problem than noise and these noisome offences were considered to pose an immediate danger to public health, while noise was not. In contrast to smells, noises rarely featured as causes of private or public nuisance in court records and noise was also afforded a lower priority than inconsiderate building practices.[140]

The London Viewers of the early modern period absorbed responsibilities previously held by the medieval Nuisance Assize. A viewer (the title hints at a visual bias) would visit a property to resolve a neighbourly dispute, usually involving building encroachments, unwelcome smoke from a chimney or blocked sunlight. The medieval Nuisance Assize had occasionally dealt with workpractices, and in 1378 had examined the case of a noisy armourer.[141] On the

---

[140] It is typical that there is no mention of noise in a work by a 'Gent. of the Temple' entitled *Public nusance [sic] considered* (London, 1754). Other works, such as *A briefe declaration for what manner of speciall nusance concerning private dwelling house, a man may have his remedy by assize or other action as the case requires* (London, 1636), display a similar lack of interest. The nuisances discussed in these works include light deprivation caused by overshadowing, dunghill creation, blocked and diverted water courses and excess smoke. See also Blackstone, *Commentaries*, III, p. 122.

[141] Helena M. Chew and William Kellaway, *The London Assize of Nuisance 1301-1431*, Publications of the London Record Society, 10 (London, 1973), pp. 160-1. The Assize of Nusiance investigated a London armourer whose neighbours were disturbed by his hammering. The landlords of the armourers argued that men of any craft 'viz. goldsmiths, smiths, pewterers, goldbeaters, grocers, pelters, marshals and armourers' are all at liberty to trade anywhere in London and to adapt their premises to suit their purposes. They maintained that ancient custom stipulates that any man

evidence of the surviving certificates, the London Viewers rarely followed up complaints about workpractices and even though crafts and trades created smells, noise and waste, the locations of work were rarely the subject of their cases. Priority was given to structural problems such as inconsiderate guttering and building which blocked sunlight.[142] For a complaint to be upheld the complainant would have to prove potential or actual damage to his property. For a case which involved noises this might have been impossible, and cases which could be literally viewed (and not heard) formed the bulk of the viewers' case load.[143]

As the authorities considered noise to be a low priority, there might have been complaints about noise that have not survived, because they did not progress to the courts. A person experiencing nuisance might have first approached the local justice of the peace, who for much of his time, would have been involved in local arbitration.[144] Alternatively, people might have approached a member of the local gentry, or the vicar, who would arbitrate informally. Records would have either not been made or failed to survive. Cases might have been presented to local officers, but ignored, either in favour of more pressing business, or because they feared the ramifications of appearing overly officious by investigating every minor offence.[145] Whether complaints were heard or recorded would have been

---

may lease property to craftsmen using great hammers, and that the neighbours have no right to complain because their messuage was built in a fashion which exaggerated any nusiance. According to Patricia Basing, *Trades and Crafts in Medieval Manuscripts* (London, 1990), p. 63. The result of this case is unrecorded.

[142] London, CRLO, Box 224A, Viewers' Presentments, 1623-1636; J.S. Loengard, *London Viewers and their Certificates*, Publications of the London Record Society, 26 (London, 1989), p. xlii.

[143] For the 1378 case the neighbours mentioned both the fire risk posed by the armourer's forge and that the hammer-falls, by shaking the party walls, damaged alcohol stored in the cellars.

[144] Cynthia Herrup, *The Common Peace, participation and the criminal law in seventeenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 54; Norma Landau, *The Justices of the Peace 1679-1760* (Berkeley, 1984), p. 174; E. Crittal (ed.), 'The Justicing Notebook of William Hunt, 1744-1749', *Wiltshire Record Society*, 37 (Devizes, 1982), p. 2.

[145] Wrightson, *English Society,* pp. 152-3; See an interesting account of an alehouse keeper serving in the night in Keith E. Wrightson, 'Two concepts of order: justices, constables and jurymen in seventeenth century England', in, John Brewer and John Styles (eds.), *An Ungovernable People. The English and their law in the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries* (London, 1980), p. 21.

influenced by the prospect of remedial action. Without specific laws governing the issuance of sounds, there was no obvious agency to receive complaints.

Modern studies show that people are most sensitive to those sounds which jar with their own lifestyle. It is also possible that there was a paucity of complaints due to the congruent lifestyles of neighbours. Sleep patterns, for example, dictated in part by available light sources, might have been similar amongst neighbours. Common noises associated with urban living, such as crying babies, barking dogs and traffic, were not easily preventable, so there would have been little point in taking issue with them; court action could not silence a crying baby. As extraordinary sounds were, by definition, occasional and unpredictable, ~~and~~ their prevention was also unfeasible.

Another factor which might explain why, despite an apparent rise in descriptions of unpleasant noise after the mid-seventeenth century, there was no significant increase in the volume of official complaints was the improved ability to escape from noise. To discuss this, I will consider first improvements in the design and construction of buildings, and the movement of citizens to quieter areas of the city, or to the countryside.

Improvements in building

The debilitating impact of sounds could be ameliorated with thoughtful building design and construction. By separating spaces used for noisy activities from those designed for quiet repose it was possible to create quiet rooms. Many developments which affected the movement of sounds into, or around, buildings were not implemented with the specific intention of improving sound insulation, but this was nonetheless achieved as a consequence. It would be impossible given the scope of this research to analyse the merits of each type and size of early modern building according to whether its design would limit or exaggerate noises.

General observations about the construction and layout of buildings, and the availability of potentially noise-reducing materials must suffice. Generally, the design, layout, and the quality of the construction materials changed during the period in ways which must have improved the opportunities for the inhabitants to escape from noise.

By the end of the sixteenth century brick was becoming increasingly widespread, gradually replacing timber, wattle and daub.[146] It became the predominant building material by the end of the seventeenth century.[147] The use of glass for windows in urban domestic buildings increased during the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries.[148] Glazed windows would have admitted fewer external sounds and reduced the volume of sounds leaking out of a building than would the chequered oak and wicker closings, or the 'window leaves' made of oiled paper or linen which they replaced.[149] Some wealthier householders would have hung sound-absorbing tapestries and oak panelling ('ceiling') on their walls.[150] Panelled chambers and plaster ceilings were typical characteristics of the houses built for gentlemen in Gloucester during the late seventeenth century.[151] These measures, which coincidentally excluded noise, were ostensibly designed to serve other purposes; panelling and tapestries insulated and were decorative and glazing admitted light.

The layout of all types of building became increasingly complex from the mid sixteenth to the mid eighteenth centuries. The use of brick increased the ease with which private spaces could be created and probably also reduced the noise

---

146 Colin Platt, *The Great Rebuildings of Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1994), p. vii.
147 M.W. Barley (ed.), *Buildings of the Countryside 1500-1750* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 40, 82.
148 Platt, *Great Rebuildings*, pp. 20-1.
149 Platt, *Great Rebuildings*, pp. 16-21; M. Cash (ed.), *Devon inventories of the 16th and 17th centuries*, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 11 (Exeter, 1966), p. xviii.
150 Norman Marlow (trans.), *The Diary of Thomas Isham of Lamport (1658-81) - 1671-3* (Farnborough, 1971), p. 185 (23 January 1673).
151 Platt, *Great Rebuildings*, p. 151.

porosity of the walls. The period witnessed the demise of the single storey house and the rise of more complex structures, with second floors, out-buildings and corridors. Homes became more compartmentalised as the period progressed. A heightened desire for privacy, segregation and symmetry in house layout led to a transformation in architectural style. The development of the parlour, and the use of rooms above the parlour for sleeping, and the insistence on a separate kitchen were characteristic elements of seventeenth century urban houses.[152] Segregation of living and working spaces meant that some people could have withdrawn to quiet rooms to escape noise made within the building. From these general shifts it is possible to infer with some confidence that the propensity of noise to permeate dwelling and working spaces would have decreased during the early modern period. This is affirmed by the connections made between layout and construction materials, in relation to noise penetration by Roger North and Sir Roger Pratt, Charles II's commissioner for the rebuilding of London after the Fire.

North compared houses which were sprawling with those where the storeys are 'lay'd on an heap like a wasps-nest' (a 'pile'), and listed the relative advantages and disadvantages of each type of structure. At the head of his list of five 'inconveniences' of a pile, North places 'all the noises of an house are heard everywhere.'[153] Piles were most commonly built in the cities, where ground space was in short supply, and building plots were narrow. Therefore, the use of the building needed to be carefully considered to limit noise intrusion.

Servants needed to be accommodated within their master's house; to sleep, to work and socialise; preferably without causing undue disruption to the rest of the household. North gave particular consideration to the disruptive sounds made

---

[152] Matthew Johnson, *Housing Culture. Traditional architecture in an English Landscape* (London, 1993), pp. 106, 128; Platt, *Great Rebuildings*, pp. 23, 151; Alan Dyer, 'Urban housing: a documentary study of four Midland towns 1530-1700', in *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 15 (1981), 207-18, p. 214.
[153] Colvin and Newman (eds), *Of Building*, p. 69.

porosity of the walls. The period witnessed the demise of the single storey house and the rise of more complex structures, with second floors, out-buildings and corridors. Homes became more compartmentalised as the period progressed. A heightened desire for privacy, segregation and symmetry in house layout led to a transformation in architectural style. The development of the parlour, and the use of rooms above the parlour for sleeping, and the insistence on a separate kitchen were characteristic elements of seventeenth century urban houses.[152] Segregation of living and working spaces meant that some people could have withdrawn to quiet rooms to escape noise made within the building. From these general shifts it is possible to infer with some confidence that the propensity of noise to permeate dwelling and working spaces would have decreased during the early modern period. This is affirmed by the connections made between layout and construction materials, in relation to noise penetration by Roger North and Sir Roger Pratt, Charles II's commissioner for the rebuilding of London after the Fire.

North compared houses which were sprawling with those where the storeys are 'lay'd on an heap like a wasps-nest' (a 'pile'), and listed the relative advantages and disadvantages of each type of structure. At the head of his list of five 'inconveniences' of a pile, North places 'all the noises of an house are heard everywhere.'[153] Piles were most commonly built in the cities, where ground space was in short supply, and building plots were narrow. Therefore, the use of the building needed to be carefully considered to limit noise intrusion.

Servants needed to be accommodated within their master's house; to sleep, to work and socialise; preferably without causing undue disruption to the rest of the household. North gave particular consideration to the disruptive sounds made

---

[152] Matthew Johnson, *Housing Culture. Traditional architecture in an English Landscape* (London, 1993), pp. 106, 128; Platt, *Great Rebuildings*, pp. 23, 151; Alan Dyer, 'Urban housing: a documentary study of four Midland towns 1530-1700', in *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 15 (1981), 207-18, p. 214.
[153] Colvin and Newman (eds), *Of Building*, p. 69.

by servants, and suggested methods of building which would accommodate their noises. He argued that servants should not live in attics and garrets 'for all offensive things fall, rather than rise, and their noise by stirring is troublesome', so instead they should be situated 'underneath'.[154] Roger Pratt suggested that when servants are located in the garrets, they should not be placed directly over the guest rooms, or they might disturb the sleepers below at night and in the morning. Rooms which were above these apartments 'for strangers' might, Pratt suggested, be used for functions such as drying clothes which do not need to be accessed at anti-social times.[155] Both North and Pratt considered the positioning of the rooms in which servants work. Pratt suggested that the kitchen, the buttery and all the rooms connected to these should be located in the basement, 'with their backcourts, convenient to them; in that no dirty servants may be seen passing to and fro by those who are above, no noises heard, nor ill scents smelt.'[156] He also suggested that the kitchen should be located near to the 'little parlour', both sufficiently away from entertaining rooms to avoid disruption, but near enough so that servants will hear 'the least ringing or call'. He recommended an ingenious design for a service-hatch-style window, through which the master and mistress could supervise and summon servants without having their senses of smell and hearing assaulted.[157] North warned that to 'clutter' the kitchen with servants would cause obstructions and slow the pace of activity. Best practice, he argued, was to provide a separate room for servants to retire to, but adding the caveat 'by no means must it be contiguous to the parlour, for the noises will be insupportable', and warning that it should not be too far removed or it would be difficult to monitor the servants.[158] Clearly this advice was not always heeded. Fifty years later, in his *Directions for*

---

[154] *ibid.*, pp. 89-90.
[155] R.T. Gunther (ed.), *The Architecture of Sir Roger Pratt* (Oxford, 1928), pp. 27, 64.
[156] *ibid.*, pp. 27.
[157] *ibid.*, p. 63.
[158] Colvin and Newman (eds), *Of Building*, , p. 138.

Servants, Swift noted that the kitchen was the general meeting place for servants; 'There, as in your own proper Element, you can laugh, and squall, and romp, in full security.'[159] By the eighteenth century urban merchants working at home were careful to divide public office space from private living quarters. The compiler of 'Draughts of a House proposed for a Merchant' (1724) detailed how his design would allow the young men who would staff the compter to slip quietly to their own chambers at night, through the use of back-stairs, without 'disturbing or dirtying the best part of the House'.[160]

The general outline of the changes in building construction, layout and use between 1560-1760 reveals that the richer members of society, especially affluent urbanites, would have had increasing access to noise-reducing building innovations as the period progressed. People's ability to escape noise depended on their ownership of space. The richer the householder, the greater the space that could be afforded, and this improved the ability to arrange the functional use of the house to limit noise intrusion, from both internal and external sources. Not all of these measures would have appeared in the same building, especially in the early part of the period. However, by the late seventeenth century, the houses of aspiring gentlemen might have several, and as the eighteenth century progressed these would have been available to increasing numbers of households as ideas percolated downwards.[161] As domestic buildings of almost all ranks of society were 'transformed almost out of recognition', there would have been implications from this transformation for the movement of noise and therefore exposure to noise.[162]

---

159 Jonathan Swift, *Directions to Servants* (London, 1745), ed. C. Rawson (London, 1995), p. 7.
160 'Explanation of the Draughts of a House proposed for a Merchant' (1724), transcribed and described by Bold, 'The Design of a House for a Merchant, 1724' (1990), p. 79.
161 Platt, *Great Rebuildings*, p. 152; Barley (ed.), *Buildings of the Countryside*, pp. 74, 144
162 Reed, *Age of Exuberance*, pp. 339-40

Servants, Swift noted that the kitchen was the general meeting place for servants; 'There, as in your own proper Element, you can laugh, and squall, and romp, in full security.'[159] By the eighteenth century urban merchants working at home were careful to divide public office space from private living quarters. The compiler of 'Draughts of a House proposed for a Merchant' (1724) detailed how his design would allow the young men who would staff the compter to slip quietly to their own chambers at night, through the use of back-stairs, without 'disturbing or dirtying the best part of the House'.[160]

The general outline of the changes in building construction, layout and use between 1560-1760 reveals that the richer members of society, especially affluent urbanites, would have had increasing access to noise-reducing building innovations as the period progressed. People's ability to escape noise depended on their ownership of space. The richer the householder, the greater the space that could be afforded, and this improved the ability to arrange the functional use of the house to limit noise intrusion, from both internal and external sources. Not all of these measures would have appeared in the same building, especially in the early part of the period. However, by the late seventeenth century, the houses of aspiring gentlemen might have several, and as the eighteenth century progressed these would have been available to increasing numbers of households as ideas percolated downwards.[161] As domestic buildings of almost all ranks of society were 'transformed almost out of recognition', there would have been implications from this transformation for the movement of noise and therefore exposure to noise.[162]

---

159 Jonathan Swift, *Directions to Servants* (London, 1745), ed. C. Rawson (London, 1995), p. 7.
160 'Explanation of the Draughts of a House proposed for a Merchant' (1724), transcribed and described by Bold, 'The Design of a House for a Merchant, 1724' (1990), p. 79.
161 Platt, *Great Rebuildings*, p. 152; Barley (ed.), *Buildings of the Countryside*, pp. 74, 144
162 Reed, *Age of Exuberance*, pp. 339-40

Preferring quiet and solitude to the noise of a great town.[163]

At the end of the seventeenth century, the compiler of *The Country Gentleman's Vade Mecum for his Comparison for the Town* instructed his country-based correspondent that to leave the country for the town would be foolish. 'What? Leave the endearing Sweets of a Country Life, for a little dull Noise, and rude Justlings and Confusion.' Directly comparing the 'Content, Happiness, and Quiet of the Country', which bestows a 'quiet easie life' with the 'Disturbance, Hazard and Noise of the City', which leads to 'a Life of Noise, Vexation and Disappointment', this author's allegiance is clear; country-life was more pleasant than city-life.[164]

By the mid-eighteenth century London had reached monstrous proportions; estimates suggest that her population was approximately 675,000.[165] In contrast to the crowded noisy urban scene, the country appeared more idyllic and improved transport by both road and water would have made the countryside more accessible for more people. Traveller Jonas Hanway was resting in Southampton in the mid-eighteenth century when he wrote that most people wished to flee from all towns, preferring the rural scene, where one can 'suck in the ambrosial air; ... delight the ear with the melody of birds, and the eye with shady groves'.[166] Later, whilst staying in the Wiltshire village of Wylye, his displeasure at the inelegance of his accommodation was compensated for by its location; 'being free from noise and hurry it was more comfortable to me than the inns in great towns.'[167]

---

[163] George Berkeley, 'Letter from Rhode Island, 9 March 1730', in Alexander Campbell Fraser (ed.), *Life and Letters of George Berkeley* (Oxford, 1871), p. 173.
[164] *The Country Gentleman's Vade Mecum for his Comparison for the Town* (London, 1699), pp. 6, 22-3. See also Carl B. Estabrook, *Urbane and Rustic England. Cultural Ties and Social Spheres in the Provinces, 1660-1780* (Manchester, 1998), pp. 253-60.
[165] Roy Porter, *London. A Social History* (London, 1994), p. 98.
[166] Jonas Hanway, *A Journal of Eight Days Journey from Portsmouth to Kingston upon Thames* (London, 1756), p. 18. See also *The Spectator*, no. 118 [Steele] 16 July 1711.
[167] Hanway, *A Journal of Eight Days Journey*, p. 101.

Carl Estabrook argues that whereas the seventeenth century accounts of the rural idyll depicted 'an idealised moral metaphor, not a place of habitation', by the mid-eighteenth century 'urbane rusticators ... actually took up residences outside cities.'[168] In September 1749 Hogarth moved from London to the furthest fringe of the sleepy village of Chiswick. His new house was surrounded by a high wall, and all of the windows faced away from the city. Hogarth, like many affluent citizens, moved out to seek respite from the sordid, dirty and noisy capital.[169]

---

[168] Estabrook, *Urbane and Rustic*, p. 256. See also, Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World. Changing attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London, 1983), pp. 245-8.
[169] Uglow, *Hogarth*, pp. 481-5.

CHAPTER 8 - CONCLUSION

In early modern England sounds could be made to communicate direct and precise messages, or to create an atmosphere or tone. Sounds could criticise or praise, welcome or shun, warn or celebrate. They could express pleasure or pain, enthusiasm or boredom, deference or insubordination, allegiance or hostility, sadness or delight. Soundmaking was a universal phenomenon; even babies and the 'deaf and dumb' made sounds to communicate their feelings.

Simple sounds could express complex messages easily and quickly. Consider the simplicity of a knock, a sound needing little skill to create. Knocking on doors, either by knuckle or by using the knocker (or 'clicket'), commanded attention for visitors. The style of knocking might have hinted at the intention of the caller. Proverbial wisdom held that 'he who knocks hard brings good news', yet in August 1666 Pepys was woken by a 'violent' knocking on his neighbours' door by someone urgently bearing bad news.[1] Under certain conditions knocking was considered to be aggressive. In 1721 Robert Piggott was dispatched to a Middlesex house of correction after he caused a disturbance at night by knocking on a lodging room door.[2] Some knocks were made to attract only the attention of specific people, and not draw undue attention. Swift's suggestion that neighbouring servants invited 'to junket' in the evening should make 'a particular way of tapping or scraping at the Kitchin Window', would have allowed the servants to hear, but not the 'Master or Lady' In John Gay's London 'Soft, at low doors, old letchers tap their cane'.[3] Thus, through the simple act of knocking, a person could indicate happiness, urgency, violence, secrecy or shame.

---

[1] George Herbert, *Jacula Prudentum - Or Outlandish proverbs, sentences, &c* (London, 1651), p. 49; *Pepys*, VII, p. 255 (20 August 1666).
[2] London, LMA, MJ/SR/2376, HOC, 7 December 1721.
[3] Jonathan Swift, *Directions to Servants* (1745), repr. C. Rawson (London, 1995), pp. 7, 11; John Gay, *Trivia, Or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London*, 2nd edn (London, 1720), bk II, line 280.

Most early modern people also heard and interpreted sounds. Only the profoundly deaf were excluded from the world of sounds. As they could not hear knocks, proverbs reminded that 'It is but even to plough the Sea, or knocke at a deafe mans doore' and 'You knock at a deafe man's doore - wrong doore.'[4] From all the sounds available to hearing ears, only a few were selected from the general hubbub for specific attention, and listening habits varied with each individual.

Much of the evidence of the use and perception of sounds in early modern England is fragmentary and particular. Individuals reacted and responded differently to sounds: some listened for signals, others ignored them; some enjoyed the bustle of the big city, others found it noisy and disturbing. Experience would have affected sensitivity to sounds; allowing people either to ignore sounds which were superfluous to their lives, or to focus on sounds which would assist them in carrying out a task. Reactions to sounds were, in part, governed by personal experiences and particular sound-memories. To pull together some threads from the chapters I will briefly consider factors affecting the issue and reception of sounds by people, as determined by their different outlooks and lifestyles, which were affected by their religion, age, gender, occupation, social status, and geographical location.

It is clear that a 'puritanical' regard for sounds existed in early modern England. When describing morris men, the Elizabethan puritan Philip Stubbes complained that the 'baudie Pipers and thundering Drummers' created 'such a confused noise that no man can hear his own voice.' Morris men did not fit into Stubbes' world-view; he thought their activities unnecessary and ungodly, and condemned their sounds as noise. Stubbes even suggested that those with luxurious lifestyle, who 'give themselves to dainty fare and sweet meats' would be more

---

[4] Arthur Dent, *The Plaine mans Path-way to Heaven. Wherein every man may clearly see, whether he shall be saved or damned* (London, 1601), p. 55; John Clarke, *Paroemiologia Anglo-Latina*, (London, 1639), p. 7.

prone to deafness.[5] Seventeenth-century puritan ministers identified types of ear which would profitably hear the Word of God and were also behind most of the requests for moderation in behaviour, frowning on immoderate laughter and loud sporting events.

Many of Shakespeare's seven ages of man, as described by Jaques in *As You Like It*, are characterised by the sounds they made; from the 'mewling' infant, to the 'whining' schoolboy and the 'sighing' lover. In his sixth age, a man's 'big manly voice' turns back to a 'childish treble'; he 'pipes / And whistles in his sound.'[6] Maturity was marked by increasing control over emotional responses. Different sounds were expected from children than from adults. Adults who created inappropriate sounds might have been regarded as childish. Experience attuned the sense of hearing, yet ageing could have caused physical deterioration, and by the seventh age the faculty could be blunted. Alternatively, peevishness might have set in by the seventh age, causing the hearer to have a lower threshold to noise.

Women were the subject of much advice regarding laughter, while men received more advice about crying. The sounds expected from bluff country squires would have been different from those expected from saucy milk maids. The majority of the activities outlined in this thesis were those of the early modern English men. Aggressive street-scouring, warring, rioting and engagement in noisy work were predominantly male activities. Most of the evidence upon which this thesis rests was mostly a product of the male pen. Consequently references to gender differences in the employment of sounds must be regarded with some caution. We need to find a way to understand the feminised sense of hearing, and

---

[5] Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomy of Abuses* (1583), ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, The New Shakspere Society, 2 vols (London, 1877-82) I, pp. 106, 146-7.
[6] William Shakespeare, *As You Like It* (London, 1623), II, vii, 144-67.

the particular ways that women actually created and heard sounds, not just the ways that men thought they would.

A person's occupation would have determined both their need to listen for particular sounds and the sounds with which they were associated. Some occupations required a developed sense of hearing and others necessitated the skilled issue of signals. Some occupations were particularly damaging to hearing, but deafness was not necessarily a bar to employment. Some workers needed to be alert to sounds. An acute sense of hearing would have helped those guarding property or people, and those working with metal, wood or stone; servants were expected to listen for knocks and to inquire about the meaning of the calls at the door.[7]

The social status of a person influenced their freedom to make sounds, and their need to listen for sounds. Servants knocked at the door before entering a room.[8] Inferiors were careful not to appear impolite in front of their immediate superiors, but might have made mocking sounds surreptitiously, or turned a deaf ear, to their advantage. Sounds were produced on behalf of those of the highest rank; abundant bellringing, bombastic drumming and grandiloquent trumpeting celebrated important people, dead or alive. Behaviour differentiated the classes. Refined women were warned that immoderate laughter sounded coarse; lower class women were warned that it suggested wantonness. When a person did not conform to the behaviour expected from their station they could be lambasted with reproachful jeers and hoots.

Labourers were expected to heed the sounds of the bells which summoned them to work. In contrast Dekker advised the 'gull' to not trouble to rise from bed 'till you heare it ring noone at least .... sleepe til you heare your belly grombles

---

[7] *Pepys*, III, p. 194 (10 September 1662).
[8] John Gough Nichols (ed.), *The Autobiography of Anne Lady Halkett*, The Camden Society, new ser., 13 (London, 1875), pp. 44, 47. See also *Pepys*, V, p. 171 (5 June 1664).

and waxeth empty.'[9] Servants were expected to listen for the commands of their employers, who in turn designed their houses to reduce their exposure to any noises resulting from the carrying out of these orders. The wealthier the individual, the more opportunities available to them to create quiet spaces to avoid noise.

Places had distinctive sound characteristics. The sounds of coastal, urban and rural areas would have been markedly different. Compared to large cities, small villages would have had fewer bells and their inhabitants were more likely to follow the rhythms of nature, to rise with the cock and sleep in the dark hours. City dwellers experienced more noise, especially at night, and enjoyed the use of a greater quantity and variety of signalling equipment, and were thought more likely to resist beliefs in superstitious sounds. Areas within towns would also have varied in their exposure to sounds, depending on the trades carried out and the consideration of the inhabitants.

Sounds could have either been welcomed or excluded from places, and they were invested with significance when they occurred at particular times. There was a distinction between expected sounds, and those which were not anticipated, and this distinction rested not only on the time and place in which the sound was heard, but also the state of mind of the hearer. Ralph Josselin's ambivalence concerning the sounds of thunder, on some occasions fearing it, on others welcoming it, suggests that when an individual was anxious or expectant, certain sounds gained meaning. Suspicion could be aroused when sounds were heard unexpectedly. When his candle extinguished one night in March 1763, Boswell worried that early morning prowling in search of a tinder-box might alarm his landlord, who 'might shoot him as a thief'. He hatched an elaborate scheme, waiting until the bellman

---

[9] Thomas Dekker, *The Gulls' Horne-Booke* (1609), repr. in George Saintsbury (ed.), *Elizabethan and Jacobean Pamphlets* (London, 1892), p. 226.

called at three, and 'then called to him to knock at the door of the house where I lodged. He did so, and I opened it to him and got my candle relumed without danger.'[10] Boswell had decided that whilst quietly creeping about the house might have triggered fears of intrusion, a knock from the bellman (which would have presumably been audible to the landlord) would have seemed a legitimate sound.

It is possible to infer causes for changes in the perceptions and utility of sounds during the period. England in 1760 was a very different place than it had been in 1560, and many social and cultural changes would have affected the issuance and perception of sounds. Three of these broad changes certainly affected aurality: the growth of literacy; expanding urbanisation and shifts in the social hierarchy.

Whereas in 1560 the majority of early modern English people were illiterate, by 1760 the majority were semi- or fully literate.[11] The dissemination of the written word would have expanded the vocabulary available to express aural experiences. It would also have created a wider audience for works such as conduct book, newspapers and journals in which the use and perception of sounds could be described. The effects of developing literacy would have been most noticeable in London, and other urban settlements, where rates were well above the national average.[12]

With increasing literacy, Corbin argues, signalling by bell became increasingly redundant; 'As the decades passed, authority was not so much expressed in auditory injunctions as in written texts ... Campanarian history collapsed at the precise moment that illiteracy became a minority affair.'[13] These shifts might well have occurred in nineteenth-century rural France, but evidence

---

[10] *Boswell's London Journal*, p. 209 (21 March 1763)
[11] J.A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England. A Social History 1550-1760* (London, 1987), p. 172.
[12] David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 72-5; Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London, 1982), p. 194.
[13] Corbin, *Village Bells*, pp. 96, 307.

from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century London provides no indication of a declining use of bells to signal messages and announcements, despite an increasingly widespread literacy. Alain Corbin also claims that bellringing was especially suited to 'a world in which walking was the chief mode of locomotion. Such a sound is attuned to the quiet tread of a peasant'. Yet, if anything, bell-utility in London was rising by the mid-eighteenth century - a society which was both highly literate and full of non-pedestrian forms of transport. Affluent householders purchased bells to call their servants and to hang at their gates.[14] Employers of large numbers of employees rang bells to summon them.[15] Added to the sounds of these bells were those of the service providers, the scavengers, coachmen, and tavern keepers. In 1746 the London Lightermen Company appointed a person to ring a tide-bell at Billingsgate.[16] Stephen Monteage's diary entries for 1738 suggests an prodigious number of honorific church bellringings for various members of the extended royal family.[17] Londoners were becoming ever more literate, and were simultaneously issuing and hearing ever more sound signals. The two methods of spreading messages were compatible and complementary. Literacy, and the publication of words, would have allowed more subtle messages to be disseminated than it was possible to produce through simple

---

[14] A Wimbledon man was taken to the house of correction in October 1749 'on a violent suspicion of stealing bells from the gates of the gentlemen in the neighbourhood', F.M. Cowe (ed.), *Wimbledon Vestry Minutes 1736, 1743-1788*, Surrey Record Society, 25 (Guildford, 1964), p. 15.

[15] 'Orders for the Burse' (1609), in T.B. Brushfield, 'Britain's Burse, or the New Exchange', *British Archaeological Association News,* 9 (1903), 90-4, pp. 92-3. For the use of bells at the Crowley ironworks see M. W. Flinn (ed.), *The Lawbook of the Crowley Ironworks*, The Surtees Society, 167 (Durham, 1957), pp. 89-91, 96.

[16] London, GL, MS 6287/6, The Watermen and Lightermen's Company, Court Minutes, (n.f.), 16 January 1746; see also 13 March 1746.

[17] London, GL, MS 205/2, Diary of Stephen Monteage' (1738), various entries throughout. The Nottingham churches of St Peter and St Mary seemed to take alternate turns ringing for a wide variety of reasons in the eighteenth century, Everard Leaver Guilford (ed.), *Records of the Borough of Nottingham. Extracts from the Archives of the Corporation of Nottingham, VI (1702-1760)* (Nottingham, 1914). On one occasion, in August 1759, both churches rang 'when the D[uke] of Cumberland pas[se]d through this Town', p. 277, see also pp. 27, 31, 77, 79, 213, 244, 264, 273, 279.

sounds, yet the immediacy, and attention-attracting quality of sounds ensured that signals were still frequently issued aurally.

The English built environment was dramatically different in 1760 than it had been two centuries previously. By 1760 there were more buildings, and these were generally more solidly constructed. Nowhere was this transition more noticeable than in the cities, and especially London. As the capital swelled, its buildings were constructed in brick, stone and glass, and were designed with segregated living and working areas. Public aural space would have changed. On the streets, sounds would have been contained by taller buildings and the ability to hear sounds over long distances would have been curtailed. As a consequence of this, and of the growing suburban population who sought refuge from the clamour of the city, the aural perspectives of the citizens would have altered. As the period progressed citizens would have found it increasingly easy to escape unwelcome sounds, and this would have heightened their awareness of noise. Listening habits and thresholds of tolerance would have changed.[18] The double disaster of pestilence and conflagration might have hastened this process.

As London grew it witnessed a burgeoning growth of a professional urban class, into whose 'polite' lifestyles the noise of sports, tinkers and alehouses did not fit.[19] This class led attacks on godlessness and immorality in early modern England that have come to be regarded as part of a broad 'reformation of manners'.[20] When those participating in football games and other sports and pastimes made sounds which expressed their enjoyment, disapproving witnesses

---

[18] Raymond Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World* (New York, 1977), pp. 43-4.
[19] Geoffrey Holmes, *Augustan England. Professions, State and Society 1680-1730* (London, 1982), pp. 3-18. Anna Bryson notes that a key development of the early modern period was the growth of London as the centre of gentlemanly conduct, in *From Courtesy to Civility. Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998), p. 281.
[20] Wrightson, *English Society*, pp. 168-9, 210-12, 214-25; Martin Ingram, 'Refromation of Manners in Early Modern England', in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle (eds), *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 47-88.

heard only noise and rowdiness.[21] Other noisy activities targeted in these campaigns and complaints were rowdy street behaviour and disorderly alehouses. It might be useful to consider whether sound disturbance was a motivating factor in either the identification of these activities as immoral, or in the desire to suppress them, in the same way as the identification of tinkers and knife-grinders as vagrants seem to have been driven by their association with noise.

When Norbert Elias considered changes in social manners and behaviour, his focus was slightly different from those who have considered the 'reformation of manners'. Descriptions of reactions to body sounds in diaries and in works of literature provide a necessary antidote to the obvious problems associated with trying to understand past behaviour from books which outlined the norms of consensual behaviour. These sources reveal that there was a wide variety of expression through sounds, some eschewed 'polite' behaviour in their quest for social advancement and some criticised 'good manners' as fake. Elias' theory appears especially naive when counterpoised with James C. Scott's insights. By paying regard only to those actions which gave the appearance of conformity, or inhibition, Elias ignored the insubordination and behavioural adaptation that occurred backstage.

This thesis has concentrated on sounds and the epistemology of hearing, therefore it has not been feasible to examine the ways that the senses worked together. Yet a blending of sensory perceptions is evident in some early modern descriptions of sound experiences. Samuel Morland, groping for an appropriate description for the effect of his 'speaking trumpet', resorted to visual terminology, writing that he 'found that it did very considerably magnifie (or rather multiply) the Voice.' Likewise, when searching for a description for ear trumpets, Francis

---

[21] For accounts of reactions to football games and Shrove Tuesday exploits see Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority. Formative Experiences in England 1560-1640* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 139-47.

Bacon opted for 'ear-spectacles'. Richard Braithwait remarked that the 'impartiall' or 'judicious' ear 'observes' what is spoken and Richard Weste warned that stammering or coughing during conversation 'doth betoken a liers smell'. Unpleasant noises were occasionally described as 'foule', or 'noisome'.[22]

Is it possible to develop an awareness of the fully embodied experience? This would be a more profitable line of enquiry than studies which claim to identify a perceived hierarchy of senses because it reflects the blending of sensory inputs that allowed the formation of experiences. People obtained access to the world through their senses, which were inseparably connected to the working of the mind, yet historians, influenced by Cartesian philosophy, have traditionally considered the mind and body as separate. As Paul Stoller remarks in his *Sensuous Scholarship* (1997) 'a sensuous awakening is a very tall order in an academy where mind has long been separated from body, sense long severed from sensibility.'[23]

By understanding the mixing of sensations, including sounds, we could move from fragmented descriptions of particular sensations to a more embodied description of experiences. Indeed David Chidester has identified this as a line of enquiry;

> A phenomenology of perception must be sensitive to the ways in which the senses were understood to cooperate within specific historical and cultural contexts. Culturally constructed assumptions regarding the operations of the sense, the ways in which they structure information, and the ways in which they orient human consciousness, are particularly important to a historical phenomenology of perception.[24]

---

[22] Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English tongues* (London, 1611), s.v. 'charivaris'; Edward Topsell described the 'su', a creature so fierce that 'when she seeth the Hunters come about her, she roareth, cryeth, howleth, brayeth, and uttereth such a fearfull, *noysome*, and terrible clamour' that it amazes then hunters, *The History of Four-footed Beasts, Serpents, and Insects* (London, 1658), p. 511, my emphasis.

[23] Paul Stoller, *Sensuous Scholarship* (Philadelphia, 1997), p. xii. See also John and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 70-2, 90; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (New York, 1962), esp. p. 138.

[24] David Chidester, *Word and Light. Seeing, Hearing and Religious Discourse* (Urbana, Ill., 1992),

However, it is perhaps naive to think that anything approaching a total study of past experiences could ever be undertaken. Jonathan Rée has argued that experience is not a 'jigsaw puzzle, waiting to be assembled into a pre-ordained pattern, with no odd pieces left over.'[25]

To situate nonverbal and non-musical sounds in the wider world of experiences, it would be necessary to consider not only how the senses worked together, but also the interplay of sounds with words, music, silence, gestures, and facial expressions. Indeed, a recurrent theme of this thesis is the need to verify audible information with evidence garnered from the other senses. In his diary Thomas Isham recounted the story of a Mr Wright, whose maid heard a noise which sounded like a person breaking a window. The household attempted to scare the intruder and to attract attention to their plight by ringing a bell and blowing a horn. These sounds attracted their neighbours, who came armed with rudimentary weapons and 'demanded to know the cause of the uproar and the maids answered in terror that thieves had broken into the yard. When they went out there they found a dog that had been shut out and had broken a window.' The misinterpretation was rectified by visual evidence. Although the household successfully obtained the assistance of others through sound signals, their need to ask 'the cause of the uproar' shows that some wordless signals needed to be qualified with verbal descriptions. When the truth was discovered, the house filled with 'roars of laughter'.[26] Signals might have attracted attention swiftly, but it would not always have been clear what they were attracting attention to. Ringings

---

p. 2.

[25] Rée, *I See a Voice*, p. 380.

[26] Norman Marlow (trans.), *The Diary of Thomas Isham of Lamport (1658-81) - 1671-3* (Farnborough, 1971), p. 175 (13 December 1672). For other examples of people making signals to attract the attention of those nearby see London, LMA, MJ/SR/1252, recs 129-31, 135, 137-8, 140-4. See also Charles Jackson (ed.), 'The Journal of Mr. John Hobson, late of Dodworth Green [1726-35]', in *Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries*, The Surtees Society, 65 (Durham, 1877), 247-329, p. 259; J. E. Foster (ed.), *The Diary of Samuel Newton, Alderman of Cambridge 1662-1717* (Cambridge, 1890), p. 60.

to broadcast news or warn of disasters would have merely alerted hearers that there was news to be heard or dangers to be guarded against. Samuel Morland recognised the limitations of simple sound signals, arguing that people might use his 'speaking trumpet' to describe to neighbours any intruders they found in their home.[27]

My inability to eliminate words and music entirely from this study, due to the indistinct boundaries between categories, illustrates the artificiality of separation. In 1711 Joseph Addison recognised the mutable nature of certain sounds when he noted that 'what is Harmony to one Ear, may be Dissonance to another'.[28] A drinker listening to the music of a fiddler in an alehouse at midnight might have found the sounds pleasurable, but a neighbour trying to sleep might not have. It could also be argued that many of the instruments upon which signals were issued were, strictly speaking, musical, and their sounds constituted a form of music. It would be useful to study the points at which music became noise, or signals became music.

An avenue of enquiry that would be especially complementary to this study is the importance of silence, quietness and peace. Conflict was intrinsically connected, both conceptually and etymologically, with 'unquiet' and lack of peace. This can be demonstrated through an incident from sixteenth-century York. A man had been 'quietlye hering of dyvine service' at St Martin's Church, Coney Street, when he was attacked, causing the congregation to be so 'troobled and disquieted' by the 'tumult and noise' that the service had to be abandoned.[29] A study of states of quietude could incorporate notions of 'living quietly' together, the significance of the word 'peace', and the condition of mental 'disquiet'

---

[27] Samuel Morland, *Tuba Stentoro-Phonica. An Instrument of Excellent Use, As well at Sea as at Land* (London, 1671), p. 14.
[28] *The Spectator*, no. 29 [Addison], 3 April 1711.
[29] John Stanley Purvis (ed.), *Tudor Parish Documents of the Diocese of York: a Selection with Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge, 1948), pp. 93-4.

fig. 12, William Hogarth, *The Cockpit* (1759)

A decade after he had decamped to the peace of Chiswick, Hogarth created one of his noisiest images, *The Cockpit* (1759) (fig. 12). It encapsulates the various themes of this thesis. The image provides illustrative material for the studies of hearing, the relationship between hearing and the other senses, deafness, signalling by sound, nonverbal communication, aggressive sounds, and noise. This image can be regarded as an exaggerated portrait of the actual sounds of cockfighting, in addition to being arch political satire.[30]

Early modern English cockfights were raucous events. When visiting the cockpit for the first time, many commentators were struck by the sounds, especially those of betting. Whilst exploring England in 1668 in the service of the Prince Cosmo of Italy, Lorenzo Magalotti wrote a lengthy commentary about cockfighting. He described the sound made by the gamblers as 'a continuous hubbub'[31] Early the following century, Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach attended a London cockfight and remarked that 'everyone begins to shout & wager before the birds are on view. As soon as the cocks appear, the shouting grows ever louder and the betting is continued.'[32] The sounds bewildered Count Kielmansegge, who exclaimed that 'no one who has not seen such a sight can conceive the uproar by which it is accompanied'.[33] Bearing in mind the views of these foreign visitors, it is perhaps appropriate that Hogarth's scene is viewed by a French noble, who looks down on the throng from the far left.

---

[30] Jenny Uglow, *Hogarth. A Life and A World* (London, 1997), p. 618.
[31] W.E. Knowles Middleton (ed. and trans.), *Lorenzo Magalotti at the Court of Charles II His Relazione d' Inghilterra of 1668* (Waterloo, Ontario, 1980), p. 128.
[32] W.H. Quarrell and Margaret Mare (eds and trans), *London in 1710 from the travels of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach* (London, 1934), p. 48. Boswell remarked that the 'uproar and noise of betting is prodigious, *Boswell's London Journal*, p. 88 (15 December 1762). See also Pepys' reaction to his first cockfight, *Pepys*, IV, pp. 447-8 (21 December 1663).
[33] Count F. Kielmansegge, *Diary of a Journey to England in the years 1761-2*, trans. Countess Kielmansegge (London, 1902), p. 241.

Uffenbach remarked that the spectators at cockfights, 'gentle and simple ... sit with no distinction of place'.[34] The men in Hogarth's image are of all ages and classes. The central focus is Lord Albermarle Bertie, a blind man. Whilst chaos ensues around him he remains still. Albermarle is taking bets, which are placed in a variety of ways. Kielmansegge observed that betting was done by signs, as words would not have been audible.[35] At the front of the image two men place their bets by knocking the butts of their whips together.[36]

The sounds which Hogarth includes are both current and incipient. The dog, presently watching with silent bemusement, might bark. Uffenbach explained that when a cock jumped amongst the crowd, to flee an aggressive combatant, it was 'driven back on to the table with great yells' from the spectators. Here, the victorious cock might crow over his dead sparring partner, who will be replaced by the next one, currently contained in a sack.

Jenny Uglow asserts that the print is 'all about *eyes*'.[37] Yet other senses are also involved, from the smell of various forms of tobacco to the physical contact between the jostling spectators. A well-dressed gentleman to the right examines his arm disdainfully after he has been barged by the post-boy, who is grabbing at Albermarle. The deaf man with a staff to the far left appears not to hear the words shouted at him through his ear-trumpet.

Body sounds are very much in evidence in the image. A man standing at the front-right of the arena is cracking his knuckles, a fat gentleman sneezes when he is sprinkled with the Frenchman's snuff, and to the far left a toothless man laughs inanely. The cause of the curious shadow cast across the arena is explained by Uffenbach; it is of a man who was unable to pay his debts. Such characters

---

[34] Quarrell and Mare (eds), *London in 1710*, pp. 48-9.
[35] Kielmansegge, *Diary of a Journey to England*, p. 241.
[36] Sean Shesgreen (ed.), *Engravings by Hogarth. 101 prints* (New York, 1973), opp. plate 93.
[37] Uglow, *Hogarth*, p. 620.

were forced to sit in a basket fastened to the ceiling and were 'drawn up in it amongst peals of laughter.'[38]

Familiar urban sounds are suggested with the inclusion of various noisy tradesmen. The post boy to the right of Albermarle carries his horn in his belt. To the far left of the image a sow gelder can be identified by his sash decorated with a horse shoe design (see fig. 6 in Chapter 4). The sow gelder used a horn to advertise his services and the execution of his job induced anguished sounds from the animals he attended to.[39] To the far right a chimney sweep, commonly associated with noise and disruption both for his bell and for the sounds produced in his work, is taking snuff.[40] Coincidentally, the publication date, 'Nov. 5th' adds another possible dimension to the sounds, with the suggestion of loud ringing bells. A Quaker is visible amongst the gathered throng, and stands at the back of the arena. This is a curious addition to such a noisy crowd, as the Quakers were associated with an appreciation of silence, and it is possible that Hogarth included him to signal hypocrisy. Neither Phillip Stubbes nor Morose would have approved of this melee.

Just as sound can be inferred from Hogarth's image, sounds can also be inferred in the sources which describe other experiences. Putting the sound back into historical perception reveals more than a soundscape of early modern England; it highlights the range of experiences and interpretations which structured and enriched the lives of early modern people.

---

[38] Quarrell and Mare (eds), *London in 1710*, pp. 48-9.
[39] Pepys noted 'Up betimes about 4 a-clock, waked by a damned noise between a sow gelder and a cow and a dog' , *Pepys*, VIII, p. 131 (1 July 1667). See also Randle Holme, *The Academy of Armory, or, A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon* (Chester, 1688), III, p. 161.
[40] For the disruptive sounds of chimney sweeping, see *Pepys*, VIII, pp. 552-3 (29 November 1667).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manuscript Sources

British Library

Sloane MS 3468 'Ringers of Cheapside orders' (1603)

Corporation of London Record Office

Journals of the London Common Council:

Jours, 16, 20 (1-2), 23 (1554-92)

Repertories of the Court of Aldermen:

Reps, 44, 78, 105, 126-7 (1629-1723)

Misc. Mss -58/35, Miscellaneous documents concerning the Bridewell apprentices from the early-eighteenth century

MS Box 224A, Viewers' Presentments (1623-36)

Guildhall Library, London

MS 68	Vintry Ward. Wardmote Inquest Minutes, 1687-1774
MS 204	Nehemiah Wallington, 'A Record of the Mercies of God: or A Thankfull Remembrance'
MS 205/2	The Diary of Stephen Monteage (1738)
MS 1175/1	St Margaret's, New Fish Street, Vestry Minute Book ,1578-1789
MS 3018/1	Wardmote Presentments for St Dunstan-in-the-West, 1558-1823
MS 4069/1	Cornhill Wardmote Inquest Minute Book, 1571-1651
MS 4069/2	Cornhill Wardmote Inquest Minute Book, 1652-1733
MS 4069/3	Cornhill Wardmote Inquest Minute Book, 1734-1800
MS 4829	Queenhithe Wardmote Inquest Book, 1667-1746
MS 4992/1	'Records of Cordwainers' and Bread Street Wards in the City of London', Manuscript by William Chaffers (n.d.)
MS 6287/6	Court minutes of the Watermen and Lightermen's Company, 1746.
MS 7090/4	Pewterers Company Minute Book, 1611-46

MS 12,071/5 Court minutes of the Armourers' and Brasiers' Company, 1719-1733

MS 22,207 'The humble petition of the Coppersmiths being freemen of London and many of them of this Company.' (late-sixteenth or early-seventeenth century)

Bridewell Hospital Records (Microfilm)

B.C.B. 6 Courtbook, 1617-26

B.C.B. 7 Courtbook, 1627-34

London Metropolitan Archives

Consistory Court of London

DL/C/251 Deposition Book February 1709 - October 1710

Middlesex and Westminster sessions

MJ/SR/526, 541-2, 546, 552, 589, 598, 1252, 1289, 1663, 2325, 2343, 2363, 2369, 2376 Middlesex Sessions of the Peace Rolls (1613-1721)

MJ/SBB/424 Middlesex Sessions of the Peace Book (1684)

MJ/SBR/1-2 Middlesex Sessions of the Peace Registers (1608-18)

MJ/GBR/2, 4, 7 Gaol Delivery Registers (1613-79)

MJ/OC/II, V Orders of the Court of Middlesex, 1730, 1744

WJ/SR (NS) 8, Westminster Sessions of the Peace Rolls (1624)

Calendar to the Books and Orders of the court (typed 1922), bk 1034

Mercers' Company Archive

Gresham Repertory 1669-1676

Printed primary sources

Aesop's fables. A selection following the translation of Sir Roger L'Estrange, Kt 1616-1704 (London, 1949)

Allen, D. H. (ed), *Essex Quarter Sessions Order Book, 1652-1661*, Essex County Council Record Office Publications, 65 (Chelmsford, 1974)

Allestree, Richard [?], *The Government of Tongue* (Oxford, 1674)

Amman, Johann Conrad, *The Talking Deafman*, trans. Daniel Foot (London, 1694)

Anderson, M. L. (ed.), *The James Carmichaell Collection of Proverbs in Scots* (1628) repr. edn (Edinburgh, 1957)

Anderson, R.C. (ed.), *The Book of Examinations and Depositions 1622-44,* Southampton Record Society, 4 vols (Southampton, 1929-36)

Angier, John, *An Helpe to Better Hearts for Better Times* (London, 1647)

The Athenian Mercury, VII, no. 28 (2 July 1692)

Aubrey, John, *Remaines of Gentilsme and Judasisme* (1688), ed. James Britten, Publications of the Folk-Lore Society, 4 (London, 1881)

Bacon, Francis, *The Essayes or Counsels, civill and morall* (London, 1625)

Bailey, Nathaniel, *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (London, 1721)

-- *Dictionarium Britannicum: or a more compleat universal etymological English dictionary than any extant* (London, 1736)

Baker, J.H. and Milsom, S.F.C, *Sources of English Legal History. Private Law to 1750* (London, 1986)

Baldwin, William, *Beware the Cat* (1570), ed. William A. Ringler Jnr, and Michael Flachmann (San Marino, 1988)

Baret, John, *An Alvearie or Quadruple Dictionarie* (London, 1580)

Barmby, J. (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of Pittington and other parishes in the diocese of Durham, from A.D. 1580 to 1700*, The Surtees Society, 84 (Durham, 1888)

Barret, Robert, *The theorike and practike of moderne Warres* (London, 1598)

Barron, C. Coleman, C. and Gobbi, C (eds), 'The London Journal of Alessandro Magno 1562', *London Journal,* 9 (1983), 136-52

Barrow, Isaac, *Against Foolish Talking and Jesting* (posth. 1678), in J. Brogden (ed.), *Illustrations of the Liturgy and Ritual of the United Church of England and Ireland. Being sermons and*

discourses selected from the works of Eminent Divines who lived during the seventeenth century, 3 vols (London, 1842)

Barton on Humber. The Town Book of 1676, The Workers' Education Authority (Barton on HUmber, 1980)

Beer, E. S. de (ed.), *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 6 vols (London, 1955)

Bennet, Christopher, *Theatrum tabidorum: or, the Nature and cure of consumption* (London, 1720)

Bennett, J.A.W. and Trevor-Roper, H.R. (eds), *The Poems of Richard Corbett* (Oxford, 1955)

The Bible. Authorized King James Version (Oxford, 1997)

Blackstone, William, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 4th edn, 4 vols (London, 1769-70)

Blencowe, R.W. (ed.), *Extracts from the Journal of Walter Gale*, Sussex Archaeological Collections, 9 (London, 1857), 182-207

Blundeville, Thomas, *The Arte of Ryding* (London, 1560)

Bourne, Henry, *Antiquitates Vulgares; Or, the Antiquities of the Common People* (Newcastle, 1725)

Bradshaw, John (ed.), *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope Earl of Chesterfield with the Characters*, 3 vols (London, 1913)

Brathwayt, Richard, *The Description of a Good Wife; or, a Rare one amongst Women* (London, 1618)

-- *Essaies upon the Five Senses, with a pithie one upon detraction* (London, 1620)

Bray, Gerald (ed.), *Documents of the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 1994)

-- *The Anglican Canons 1529-1947*, The Church of England Record Series, 6 (Woodbridge, 1998)

Breton, Nicholas, *The Good and the Badde, or, Descriptions of Worthies, and Unworthies of this Age* (London, 1616)

B[rewer], T[h]om[as], *The Weeping Lady: Or, London like Ninivie in Sack-Cloth* (London, 1625)

Bridges, John, *A Sermon preached at Paul's Cross* (London, 1571)

A briefe declaration for what manner of speciall nusance concerning private dwelling house, a man may have his remedy by assize or other action as the case requires (London, 1636)

Britten, William, *Silent Meeting, a Wonder to the World; yet practised by the Apostles, and owned by the People of God, scornfully called Quakers* (London, 1660)

Brockbank, W. and Kenworthy, F. (eds), *The Diary of Richard Kay 1716-51 of Baldingstone, nr. Bury. A Lancashire Doctor*, The Chetham Society, 3rd ser., 16 (Manchester, 1968)

Brown, Tom, *Amusements Serious and Comical. Calculated for the Meridian of London* (London, 1700)

Buchanan, James, *Linguae Britannicae Vera Pronunciatio: or, A New dictionary* (London, 1757)

Bülow, Gottfried von (trans.),'Diary of the Journey of Philip Ju tius, Duke of Stettin-Pomerania, through England in the Year 1602', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, new ser., 6 (1892), 1-67

-- 'Journey through England and Scotland made by Lupold von Wedel in the Years 1584-1585', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, new ser., 9 (1895), 223-70

Bulwer, John, *The Chirologia, or the Natural Language of the Hand* (London 1644)

-- *Philocophus: or, the Deafe and Dumbe Mans Friend* (London, 1648)

Bunyan, John, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, ed. Roger Sharrock (Oxford, 1962)

-- *A Few Sighs from Hell* (1658), in T.L. Underwood and Roger Sharrock (eds), *The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan*, 13 vols (Oxford, 1980) I

Burgess, Daniel, *Rules for hearing the Word of God*, 2nd edn (London, 1693)

Burke, Sir Bernard, *The Romance of the Aristocracy: or Anecdotes and Records of Distinguished Families*, 3 vols (London, 1855)

Burne, S.A.H. (ed.), *The Staffordshire Quarter Sessions Rolls IV 1598-1602*, Staffordshire Record Society, 59 (London, 1939)

Burrow, Sir James, *Reports of Cases Adjudged in the Court of King's Bench*, 3rd edn, 5 vols (Dublin, 1784-5)

Burton, Robert, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1621)

Butler, Charles, *The Feminine Monarchie, or A treatise concerning bees, and the due ordering of them* (Oxford, 1609)

Cadogan, William, *An essay upon nursing and the management of children from their birth to three years of age* (first publ. 1748), 10th edn (London, 1772)

Campbell, R., *The London Tradesman: Being a Compendious view of All the Trades, Professions, Arts, both Liberal and Mechanic, now practised in the Cities of London and Westminster* (London, 1747)

Carew, Richard, *The Survey of Cornwall* (1602), ed. F.E. Halliday (London, 1969)

Cawdrey, Robert, *A Table Alphabeticall* (London, 1604)

Chambers, L. H. (ed.), 'Bedfordshire Bells, c. 1710', *Bedfordshire Historical Record Society*, 12 (Aspley Guise, 1928), 99-101

Charke, Charlotte, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs Charlotte Charke, youngest daughter of Colley Cibber ... written by Herself* (London, 1755)

Chew, Helena M. and Kellaway, William (eds), *The London Assize of Nuisance 1301-1431*, Publications of the London Record Society, 10 (London, 1973)

Chomel, Noel, *Dictionnaire oeconomique, or the Family Dictionary*, 2 vols (London, 1725)

Clarke, John, *Paroemiologia Anglo-Latina*, (London, 1639)

Clifford, D.J.H. (ed.), *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford* (Stroud, 1992)

Cockeram, Henry, *English Dictionarie* (London, 1623)

Codrington, Robert, *A Collection of Many select and excellent Proverbs out of several Languages* (London, 1672)

Colvin, Howard and Newman, John (eds), *Of Building. Roger North's Writings on Architecture* (Oxford, 1981)

The Compleat Servant-Maid; or, the Young Maidens Tutor (London, 1677)

Connor, W. J. (ed.), *The Southampton Mayor's Book of 1606-1608,* Southampton Record Society, 21 (Southampton, 1978)

Cotgrave, Randle, *A Dictionarie of the French and English tongues* (London, 1611).

The Country Spy; Or a Ramble thro' London (London, c.1750)

The Country Gentleman's Vade Mecum for his Comparison for the Town (London, 1699)

Cowe, F.M. (ed.), *Wimbledon Vestry Minutes 1736, 1743-1788*, Surrey Record Society, 25 (Guildford, 1964).

Cox, John Edmund (ed.), *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, martyr, 1556*, The Parker Society, 18 (Cambridge, 1846)

Crawford, Donald (ed.), *Journals of Sir John Lauder, Lord Fountainhall, with his Observations on Public Affairs and other memoranda, 1665-1676* (Edinburgh, 1900)

Crittal, E. (ed.), 'The Justicing Notebook of William Hunt 1744-1749', *Wiltshire Record Society*, 37 (Devizes, 1982)

Cuffe, Henry, *The Different Ages of a Man's Life*, 3rd edn (London, 1640)

Dalton, Michael, *The Countrey Justice. Conteyning the practise of the Justices of the peace out of their sessions* (London, 1618)

-- *The Countrey Justice. Conteyning the practise of the Justices of the peace out of their sessions*, enlarged edn (London, 1666)

Davies, Godfrey (ed.), *The Autobiography of Thomas Raymond and memoirs of the family of Guise of Elmore, Gloucestershire*, Camden Society, 3rd ser., 28 (London, 1917)

Defoe, Daniel, *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), ed. by A. Burgess and C. Bristow (London, 1966)

-- *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724-1726), ed. Pat Rogers (London, 1971)

-- *Every-body's business is no-body's business* (London, 1725)

-- *The Complete English Tradesman, in Familiar Letters: Directing him in all the Several Parts and Progressions of Trade* (London, 1727)

-- *A Plan of the English Commerce. Being a compleat prospect of the trade of this nation, as well the home trade as the foreign* (London, 1728)

Defoe, Daniel [imitator], *The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Duncan Campbell, A Gentleman, who, tho' Deaf and Dumb, writes down any Stranger's name at first Sight; with their future Contingencies of Fortune* (1720), in *Miscellaneous Works of Daniel Defoe*, 7 vols (London, c. 1893), VI

Dekker, Thomas, *The Seven deadlie Sinns of London: Drawne in seven severall Coaches, Through the seven severall Gates of the Citie. Bringing the plague with them* (1606), ed. H.F.B. Brett-Smith (Oxford, 1922)

-- *The Gulls Horne-Booke* (1609), repr. in George Saintsbury (ed.), *Elizabethan and Jacobean Pamphlets* (London, 1892)

Dent, Arthur, *The Plaine mans Path-way to Heaven. Wherein every man may clearly see, whether he shall be saved or damned* (London, 1601)

Drew, Charles (ed.), *Lambeth Churchwardens' Accounts 1504-1645 and Vestry Book 1610*, Surrey Record Society, 2 vols (18 and 20) (London, 1941-2)

Good manners for schools or a paraphrase upon qui mihi etc. trans. Dykes, Oswald, [Broadsheet], (London, 1700)

Earle, John, *The Autograph Manuscript of Microcosmographie* (c.1627) facs. edn (Leeds, 1966)

-- *Microcosmography: Or, A Piece of the World Discover'd in Essays and Characters* (London, 1632)

East, E. Hyde, *Reports of Cases argued and determined in the Court of King's Bench*, 16 vols (London, 1801-14)

Egerton, Stephen, *The boring of the eare, contayning a plaine and profitable discourse by way of dialogue* (London, 1623)

Elwes-Corrie, George (ed.), *Sermons of Hugh Latimer, sometime Bishop of Worcester, Martyr, 1555*, The Parker Society, 23 (Cambridge, 1844)

Elyot, Thomas, *Dictionary* (1538) facs edn (Menston, 1970)

An Essay upon Harmony (London, 1729)

Exwood, M. and Lehmann, H.L. (eds and trans), *The Journal of William Schellinks' Travels in England 1661-1663*, The Camden Society, 5th ser., 1 (London, 1993)

Farmiloe, J.E. and Nixseaman, Rosita (eds), *Elizabethan Churchwardens' Accounts*, Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 33 (Streatley, 1953)

Fielding, Henry, *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* (1755), in Ian A. Bell and Andrew Varney (eds), *Henry Fielding. A Journey from this World to the Next and The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* (Oxford, 1997)

Fincham, K. (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church* (Woodbridge, 1994)

Firth, C.H. (ed.), *The Clarke Papers. Selections from the paper of William Clarke, Secretary to the Council of the Army, 1647-1649, and to General Monck and the Commanders of the Army in Scotland, 1651-1660*, The Camden Society, new ser., 49 (London, 1891)

Flavell, John, *Husbandry Spiritualized; or the heavenly use of earthly things* (London, 1669)

Fleming, Abraham, *A Panoplie of Epistles; Or, a looking glasse for the unlearned* (London, 1576)

Flinn, M. W. (ed.), *The Law Book of the Crowley Ironworks*, The Surtees Society, 167 (Durham, 1957)

Foster, J. E. (ed.), *The Diary of Samuel Newton, Alderman of Cambridge 1662-1717* (Cambridge, 1890)

Fox, Levi (ed.), *Coventry Constables' Presentments 1629-1742*, Publications of the Dugdale Society, 34 (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1986)

Fraser, Alexander Campbell (ed.), *Life and Letters of George Berkeley* (Oxford, 1871)

Frere, W.H. (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the period of the Reformation III 1559-1575*, Alcuin Club Collections, 16 (London, 1910)

Fuller, Thomas, *The Holy State and The Profane State* (1642), ed. M. Graff Walten, 2 vols (New York, 1938)

Fuller, Thomas, *Gnomologia: Adagies and Proverbs, Wise Sentences and Witty Sayings, Ancient and Modern, Foreign and British* (London, 1732)

Furnivall, Frederick J. (ed.), *The Babees Book, Aristotle's ABC, Urbanitatis, Stans Puer as mensam, etc. The Bokes of Nurture of H. Rhodes and J. Russell. W. de Worde's Boke of Keruynge, the Booke of Demeanor, the Boke of Curtasye, Seager's Scoole of Vertue, etc. With some French*

and Latin poems of like subjects, and some forewords on education in early England, Early English Text Society, orig. ser., 32 (London, 1868)

Gardiner, Samuel Rawson (ed.), *Reports of Cases in the Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission*, The Camden Society, new ser., 39 (London, 1886)

Garry, Francis N. A and, A. G. (eds), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of the parish of St Mary's, Reading, Berkshire, 1550-1662* (Reading, 1893)

Gaule, John, *The Mag-astro-mances, or the Magicall-Astrologicall-Divines Posed, and Puzzled* (London, 1652)

Gay, John, *Rural Sports, a Poem* (London, 1713)

-- *The Shepherd's Week* (1714), in John Underhill (ed.), *The Poetical Works of John Gay*, 2 vols (London, 1893), I,

-- *Trivia: Or the Art of Walking the Streets of London* (London, 1716)

-- *Trivia, Or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London*, 2nd edn (London, 1720)

A General Description of all Trades (London, 1747)

Gent, *Public nusance [sic] considered* (London, 1754)

The Gentleman's Magazine, no. 11 (April 1741), and no. 18 (December 1748)

Gibbs, James, *Book of Architecture containing designs of buildings and ornaments*, 2nd edn (London. 1728)

Gibson, Edmund (ed.), *Camden's Britannia, Newly Translated into English: with large Additions and Improvements* (London, 1695)

Gifford, George, *A Discourse of the subtill Practises of Devilles by Witches and Sorcerers* (London, 1587)

Goldsmith, Oliver, *Retaliation: A Poem. Including Epitaphs on the Most Distinguished Wits of this Metropolis* (London, 1774)

Gouge, William, *Of Domesticall duties. Eight Treatises* (London, 1622)

Greene, D. G. (ed.), *The Meditations of Lady Elizabeth Delaval, 1662-1671*, Publications of the Surtees Society, 190 (Durham, 1978)

Grose, Francis, *The Olio: Being a Collection of Essays etc.* (posth., London, 1792)

Grove, Edward, *Mirth's Madness, or the Vanity of Mens Laughter, and of their Merry Amusements in their Idle Hours. Considered in a Sermon Upon Ecclesiastes II.1,2* (Norwich, 1702)

Guilford, Everard Leaver (ed.), *Records of the Borough of Nottingham, being a series of extracts from the Archives of the Corporation of Nottingham, VI (1702-1760)* (Nottingham, 1914)

-- *Extracts from the Records of the Borough of Nottingham* [1620s and 1630s], Transactions of the Thoroton Society, 30 (Nottingham,1926), 108-36

Gurnall, William, *The Christian in Complete Armour; A treatise of the Saints' War against the Devil* (first published 1655-6), repr. in 2 vols (Glasgow, 1864)

Hacket, John, *Scrinia Reserata: a memorial offer'd to the great deservings of J. Williams*, 2 vols (London, 1692)

Hale, Matthew, *Historia Placitorum Coronae. The History of the Pleas of the Crown*, 2 vols (London, 1736)

Halifax, George Savile, Marquis of, *The Lady's New-years Gift: or, Advice to a Daughter, Under these following Heads: Viz. Religion, Husband, House and Family, Servants, Behaviour and Conversation, Friendship, Censure, Vanity and Affection, Pride, Diversions, Dancing* (London, 1688)

Halliwell, James Orchard (ed.), *The Private Diary of Dr. John Dee and the catalogue of his library of manuscripts*, The Camden Society, 19 (London, 1842)

Hanway, Jonas, *A Journal of Eight Days' Journey from Portsmouth to Kingston upon Thames* (London, 1756)

Hardy, William Le., *Calendar to the Sessions Records, new series* (1612-16), Middlesex County Records, 3 vols (London, 1935-7)

Harland, John (comp. and ed.), 'Diary of a Manchester Wig-Maker 1712-15', in *Collectanea relating to Manchester and its Neighbourhood at Various Periods*, Chetham Society, old ser., 68 (Manchester, 1866)

Harrison, William, *Description of England in Shakspere's Youth* (1577), ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, The New Shakspere Society, 6, 4 vols (London, 1877-1908)

Harrison, William, *The Difference of Hearers or an exposition of the parable of the sower. Delivered in Certaine sermons at Hyton in Lancashire* (London, 1614).

Harte, Walter J., Schopp, J.W. and Tapley-Soper, H.,(eds), *The Description of the Citie of Excester, by John Vowell alias Hoker, gentleman and chamberlayne of the same*, Publications of the Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 3 vols (Exeter, 1919-47)

Harvey, William, 'De mortu cordis', in *The Works of William Harvey*, ed. Robert Willis (London, 1847)

Hawkins, Edward (ed.), *Travels in Holland, the United Provinces, England, Scotland and Ireland 1634-1635, by Sir William Brereton (1604-1661)*, The Chetham Society, old ser., 1 (Manchester, 1844)

Hawkins, William, *A Treatise of the Pleas of the Crown; or a system of the principal matters relating to that subject digested under their proper heads*, 2 vols (London, 1724-6)

Hell upon Earth: or the Town in an Uproar, (1729), facs edn, Marriage, Sex, and the Family in England, 1660-1800 (New York, 1985)

Hearnshaw, F. J. C. (ed.), *Leet Jurisdiction in England, especially as illustrated by the Records of the Court Leet of Southampton*, Southampton Record Society, 5 (Southampton, 1908)

Hearnshaw, F.J.C. and D.W. (eds), *Southampton Court Leet Records*, Publications of the Southampton Record Society, 4 vols (Southampton, 1905-1908)

Herbert, A.P., *Mr Gay's London. With extracts from Proceedings at the Sessions of the Peace, and Oyer and Terminer for the City of London and County of Middlesex in the Years 1732 and 1733* (London, 1948)

Herbert, George, *Jacula Prudentum - Or Outlandish proverbs, sentences &c.* (London, 1651)

Hervey, John, *Some Materials Towards Memoirs of the Reign of King George II*, ed. Romney Sedgwick, 3 vols (London, 1932)

Heywood, John, *A Dialogue of Proverbs* (1546), ed. R.E. Habenicht (Berkeley, 1963)

Heywood, Thomas (ed), *The Diary of the Rev. Henry Newcome, from September 30, 1661 to September 29, 1663*, The Chetham Society, 18 (Manchester, 1849)

Hill, Thomas, *The Arte of Gardening* (London, 1608)

-- *A profitable instruction to the perfect ordering of bees*, 2nd edn (London, 1608)

Hindley, Charles (ed.), *The Old Book Collector's Miscellany: Or, a Collection of Readable Print of Literary Rarities*, 3 vols (London, 1871-3)

Hobbes, Thomas, *Leviathan* (1651) ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge, 1996)

Hobson, Mary G. and Salter, Herbert Edward (eds), *Oxford Council Acts, 1626-1665*, Oxford Historical Society, 95 (Oxford, 1933)

Hobson, Mary G. (ed.), *Oxford Council Acts 1665-1701*, Oxford Historical Society, new ser., 2 (Oxford, 1940)

Hodges, Nath[aniel], *Loimologia: or, an Historical Account of the Plague in London in 1665: with precautionary Directions against the like Contagion*, trans. John Quincy (London, 1720)

Hodgkinson, R.F.B. (ed.), 'Extracts from the Act books of the Archdeaconry of Nottingham II', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 30 (Nottingham, 1926), 11-57

-- 'Extracts from the Act Books of the Archdeaconry of Nottingham III', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 31 (Nottingham, 1927), 108-53

Hogarth, William, *The Analysis of Beauty* (1753) facs edn (Menston, 1971)

Holder, William, *Elements of Speech: an Essay of Inquiry into The Natural Production of Letters: with an Appendix Concerning Persons Deaf and Dumb* (London, 1669)

Holme, Randle, *The Academy of Armory, or, A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon*, 3 parts (Chester, 1688)

Hooke, Robert, *Posthumous Works of Robert Hooke*, 2nd edn (London, 1705)

Houghton, John, *A Collection For Improvement of Husbandry and Trade*, IV, no. 95, 25 May 1694

Houlbrooke, Ralph, *English Family Life, 1576-1716, an Anthology from Diaries* (Oxford, 1988)

Hunter, Joseph (ed.), *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby FRS, Author of the Topography of Leeds (1677-1724)* 2 vols (London, 1830)

Hutcheson, Francis, *Reflections upon Laughter, and Remarks Upon the Fable of the Bees* (Glasgow, 1750)

Jackson, Charles (ed.), *The Diary of Abraham de la Pryme, the Yorkshire Antiquary*, The Surtees Society, 54 (Durham, 1870)

-- 'The Journal of Mr. John Hobson, late of Dodworth Green [1726-35]', in *Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries*, The Surtees Society, 65 (Durham, 1877), 247-329

Jeaffreson, John Cordy (ed), *Middlesex County Records*, Middlesex County Record Society, 4 vols (London, 1886-92)

Jessopp, Augustus (ed.), *The Lives of the Norths*, 3 vols (London, 1890)

-- *The Autobiography of Roger North* (London, 1887)

Johnson, H.C. (ed.), *Quarter Sessions Records 1682-1690*, Warwick County Records, 8 (Warwick, 1953)

Johnson, Samuel, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1755)

Johnstone, Hilda (ed.), *Churchwardens' Presentments (Seventeenth Century) part 1, Archdeaconry of Chichester*, Sussex Record Society, 49 (Lewes, 1948)

-- *Churchwardens' Presentments (Seventeenth Century) part 2, Archdeaconry of Lewes*, Sussex Record Society, 50 (Lewes, 1949)

Jones, Erasmus, *The Man of Manners: Or, Plebian Polish'd. Being Plain and Familiar Rules for a Modest and Genteel Behaviour, on most of the ordinary Occasions of Life*, 3rd edn (London, 1737)

Jonson, Ben, *Volpone or the Foxe* (1607), in Michael Jamieson (ed.), *Three Comedies of Ben Jonson* (Harmondsworth, 1966)

-- *Epicoene or the Silent Woman*, ed. L.A. Beaurline (London, 1966)

Kelly, James, *A Compleat Collection of Scottish Proverbs, Explained and made Intelligible to the English Reader* (London, 1721)

Ker, W.P. (ed.), *Essays of John Dryden*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1900)

Kermode, Frank and Walker, Keith (eds), *Andrew Marvell* (Oxford, 1990)

Kersey, John, *A New English Dictionary* (London, 1702)

-- *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum: or, a general English Dictionary* (London, 1708)

Kielmansegge, F., *Diary of a Journey to England in the years 1761-2*, trans. Countess Kilemansegge (London, 1902)

Kirk, Robert, 'Sermons, conferences, men's opinions of the late Transactions with a description of London ' (1689), transcribed by Donald Maclean as 'London in 1689-90 by the Rev. R. Kirk. Parts III', *London and Middlesex Archaeological Society Transactions*, new ser., 6, (London, 1933) 652-61; 7 (London, 1933), 133-49

Lambard, William, *Eirenarcha or of the office of the justices of peace* (London, 1581)

-- *The duties of Constables, Borsholders, Tithingmen, and such other low Ministers of the Peace* (London, 1583)

Latham, Robert and Matthews, William (eds), *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, 11 vols (London, 1970-83)

Laugh and Lye Down; Or, A pleasant, but sure Remedy for the Gout, Without Expence or Danger (London, 1739)

Lawes of the Market (1595), facs edn (Amsterdam, 1974)

Locke, John, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), ed. John W. Yolton and Jean S. Yolton (Oxford, 1989)

Loengard, J.S. (ed.), *London Viewers and their Certificates*, Publications of the London Record Society, 26 (London, 1989)

Low-Life; or one half of the world knows not how the Other Half Live ... in the Twenty-four Hours, between Saturday-Night and Monday-Morning. In a true Description of a Sunday, as it is usually spent within the Bills of Mortuality, 3rd edn (London, 1764)

Lupton, Donald, *London and the Countrey Carbonadoed and Quartered into Severall Characters* (London, 1632)

MacFarlane, Alan (ed.), *The Diary of Ralph Josselin, 1616-1683*, Records of Social and Economic History, new ser., 3 (Oxford, 1976)

McKerrow, Ronald B. (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 5 vols (London, 1910)

Magalotti, Lorenzo, *Travels of Cosmo the third, Grand Duke of Tuscany through England, during the reign of King Charles the Second*, ed. Joseph Mawman (London, 1821)

Malden, Henry Eliot (ed.), 'Iter bellicosum: Adam Wheeler his account of 1685', in *The Camden Miscellany*, The Camden Society, 3rd ser., 18 (London, 1910), 153-68

Manchée, William Henry, *The Westminster City Fathers, the Burgess Court of Westminster, 1585-1901* (London, 1924)

Markham, Gervase, *The English hus-wife, contayning, the inward and outward vertues which ought to be in a compleat woman* (1615), ed. Michael R. Best (Montreal, 1986)

-- *The Souldiers Exercise* (London, 1639)

-- *Country Gentleman's Companion,* 2 vols (London, 1753)

Marlow, Norman (trans.), *The Diary of Thomas Isham of Lamport (1658-81) - 1671-3* (Farnborough, 1971)

Matthews, William (trans. and ed.), *The Diary of Dudley Ryder, 1715-1716* (London, 1939)

Middleton, W.E. Knowles (ed. and trans.), *Lorenzo Magalotti at the Court of Charles II His Relazione d'Inghilterra of 1668*,(Waterloo, Ontario, 1980)

Middleton, Thomas, *The Triumphs of Love and Antiquity, and honorable Solemnitie performed through the Citie at the confirmation of Sir W. Cockayne, in the Office of Lord Maior of London* (1619), in Arthur Henry Bullen (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Middleton*, 8 vols (London, 1885-6), VII.

Mirth in Ridicule, or a Satyr against Immoderate Laughing (London, 1708)

Misson, Henri, *Memoirs and Observations in his Travels over England with some Account of Scotland and Ireland* (orig. publ. 1698), trans. J. Ozell (London, 1719)

Montagu, Basil (ed.), *The Works of Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England*, 16 vols (London, 1825-36)

Moody, Joanna (ed.), *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady. The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599-1605* (Stroud, 1998)

Morland, Samuel, *Tuba Stentoro-phonica - An Instrument of Excellent Use, As well at Sea as at Land* (London, 1671)

Morris, Christopher (ed.), *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes* (London, 1947)

Moryson, Fynes, *An Itinerary*, in 3 parts (London, 1617)

The New Yeares' Wonder. Being a most cernaine [sic] and true Relation of thedisturned inhabitants of Kenton (London, 1642)

Niccols, Richard *The Cuckow* (London, 1607)

Nichols, John Gough (ed.) *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, The Camden Society, old ser., 42 (London, 1848)

-- *The Autobiography of Anne Lady Halkett*, The Camden Society, new ser., 13 (London, 1875)

Nott, H.E. (ed.), *The Deposition Books of Bristol. Vol.1; 1643-1647*, Publications of the Bristol Record Society, 6 (Bristol, 1935)

Overbury, Thomas, *Characters* (1614), repr. ed. by W.J. Paylor, *The Overburian Characters. To which is added A Wife*, Percy Reprints, 13 (Oxford, 1936)

Parker Sorlien, R. (ed.), *The Diary of John Manningham of the Middle Temple, 1602-3* (Hanover, New Hampshire, 1976)

Parkinson, R. (ed.), *The Autobiography of Henry Newcome*, The Chetham Society, 26 (Manchester, 1852).

-- *The Private Journal and Literary Remains of John Byrom*, 2 vols (each in two parts), The Chetham Society, old ser., vols 32, 34, 40 and 44 (Manchester, 1854-7)

Parsloe, Guy (ed.), *The Minute Book of Bedford Corporation, 1647-1664*, Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 26 (Streatley, 1949)

Peacham, Henry (the elder), *The Garden of Eloquence, conteyning the figures of Grammer and rhetorick, from whence maye bee gathered all manner of Flowers, Coulors, Ornaments, exornations, forms, and fashions of speech* (London, 1577)

Peckham, W.D. (ed.), *The Acts of the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral Church of Chichester, 1545-1642*, Sussex Record Society, extra ser., 58 (Lewes, 1960)

Peyton, Sidney A. (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Presentments in the Oxfordshire Peculiars of Dorchester, Thame and Banbury 1600-1834*, Oxfordshire Record Society, 10 (Oxford, 1928)

Phillips, Edward, *The Mysteries of Love and Eloquence, or, the Arts of Wooing and Complementing* (London, 1658)

Pickering, Danby, *Statutes at Large, from the eighth year of King William III to the second year of Queen Anne*, 42 vols (Cambridge, 1762-99)

The Pinder of Wakefield, ed. E.A. Horsman, English Reprints Series, 12 (Liverpool, 1956)

Plomer, Henry R. (ed.), *The Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Nicholas, Strood, 1603-1662*, Kent Archaeological Society Record Series, 5 (Canterbury, 1927)

Pottle, Frederick A. (ed.), *Boswell's London Journal 1762-63* (London, 1950)

Pound, John F. (ed.), *The Norwich Census of the Poor 1570*, Norfolk Record Society, 40 (Norwich, 1971)

Poynter, F.N.L. (ed.), *The Journal of James Yonge [1647-1721] - Plymouth Surgeon* (London, 1936)

Pressey, W.J. (ed.), 'The churchwardens' accounts of West Tarring', *Sussex Notes and Queries*, 4 (1933), 199-203; 8 (1942), 78-9

Procter, Thomas, *Of the knowledge and conducte of warres* (London, 1578)

Purvis, John Stanley (ed.), *Tudor Parish Documents of the Diocese of York. A selection with introduction and notes* (Cambridge, 1948)

Puttenham, George, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London, 1589)

Quarrell, W. H. and Mare, Margaret (eds and trans), *London in 1710 from the Travels of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach* (London, 1934)

Raine, Angelo (ed.), *York Civic Records VI-VIII,* The Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 112, 115, 119 (Wakefield, 1948-1953)

Raine, James Jnr (ed.), *Depositions from the Castle of York, relating to offences committed in the Northern Counties in the seventeenth century*, The Surtees Society, 40 (Durham, 1861)

Ramazzini, Bernardini, *De Morbis Artificum [Diseases of Workers]* (1713), trans Wilmer Cave Wright (Chicago, 1640)

Ramesey, William, *The Gentleman's Companion: or, A Character of True Nobility and Gentility: In the way of Essay* (London, 1672)

Ratcliff, S.C. and Johnson, H.C. (eds), *Quarter Sessions Orders 1665-1674*, Warwick County Records 5 (Warwick, 1939)

R[ay], J[ohn], *A Collection of English Proverbs Digested into a Convenient Method for the Speedy finding any one upon occasion; With Short Annotations* (Cambridge, 1670)

-- *A Collection of English Proverbs*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1678)

Razzell, Peter (ed.), *The journals of two travellers in Elizabethan and early Stuart England. Thomas Platter and Horatio Busino* (London, 1995)

Rhodes, Neil (ed.), *John Donne. Selected prose* (London, 1987)

Roberts, Lewes, *The Merchants Map of Commerce: Wherein the Universal Manner and Matter of Trade is Compendiously Handled*, 3rd edn (London, 1677)

Robinson, Henry W. and Adams, Walter (eds), *The Diary of Robert Hooke 1672-1680* (London, 1935)

Rogers, Pat (ed.), *Jonathan Swift. The Complete Poems* (London, 1983)

R[oss], A[lexander], *Arcana Microcosmi: Or, The hid Secrets of Man's Body discovered; In an Anatomical Dual between Aristotle and Galen concerning the Parts thereof* (London, 1652)

Rye, Walter (ed.), 'Extracts from Court Books of the City of Norwich 1666-1688', *Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society*, extra parts, 2 (Norwich, 1905), 97-205

Rye, William Brenchley, *England as seen by Foreigners in the days of Elizabeth and James the First* (London, 1865)

S., T., *A jewell for the gentrie* (London, 1614)

Sachse, William L. (ed.), *Minutes of the Norwich Court of Mayorality, 1630-1631*, Norfolk Record Society, 15 (London, 1942)

Saintsbury, George (ed.), *Elizabethan and Jacobean Pamphlets* (London, 1892)

Salkeld, William, *Reports of Cases Adjudge'd in the Court of King's Bench*, 3rd edn, 2 vols (London, 1717)

Salzman, L. F. (ed.), *The Town Book of Lewes, 1542-1701*, Sussex Record Series, 48 (Lewes, 1947)

Sayle, Charles (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Browne*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1912)

Scholefield, James (ed.), *The Works of John Pilkington, B.D., Lord Bishop of Durham,* The Parker Society, 3 (Cambridge, 1842)

Scot, Reginald, *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London, 1584)

Select Trials at the Sessions House in the Old Bailey for murder, robbery, rapes, sodomy, coining, frauds, bigamy, and other offences (1742) facs edn, Marriage, Sex, and the Family in England, 1660-1800, 21, 4 vols (New York, 1985)

Shakespeare, William, *The Rape of Lucrece* (London, 1594)

-- *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second* (London, 1597)

-- *Romeo and Juliet* (London, 1599)

-- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London, 1600)

-- *The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth* (London, 1623)

-- *The Tempest* (London, 1623)

-- *As You Like It* (London, 1623)

-- *The Taming of the Shrew* (London, 1623)

Shesgreen, Sean (ed.), *The Criers and Hawkers of London, Engravings and Drawings by Marcellus Laroon* (Aldershot, 1990)

-- *Engravings by Hogarth. 101 Prints* (New York, 1973)

Sibscota, George, *The Deaf and Dumb Man's Discourse. Or A Treatise concerning those that are Born Deaf and Dumb, containing a Discovery of their Knowledge or Understanding* (London, 1670)

Signe from Heaven: Or, a Fearful and Terrible Noise heard in the Ayre at Alborow in the County of Suffoke (London, 1642)

Smith, Verena (ed.), *The Town Book of Lewes 1702-1837*, Sussex Record Society, 69 (Lewes, 1973)

The Spectator, various editions between numbers 4 and 472 [1711-12]

Spedding, James, Ellis, Robert Leslie and Heath, Douglas Denon (eds), *The Works of Francis Bacon*, 14 vols, (London, 1857-74)

Stanford, Maureen (ed.), *The Ordinances of Bristol 1506-1598*, Publications of the Bristol Record Society, 41 (Bristol, 1990)

Sayle, Charles (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Browne*, 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1912)

Scholefield, James (ed.), *The Works of John Pilkington, B.D., Lord Bishop of Durham,* The Parker Society, 3 (Cambridge, 1842)

Scot, Reginald, *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London, 1584)

Select Trials at the Sessions House in the Old Bailey for murder, robbery, rapes, sodomy, coining, frauds, bigamy, and other offences (1742) facs edn, Marriage, Sex, and the Family in England, 1660-1800, 21, 4 vols (New York, 1985)

Shakespeare, William, *The Rape of Lucrece* (London, 1594)

-- *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second* (London, 1597)

-- *Romeo and Juliet* (London, 1599)

-- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London, 1600)

-- *The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth* (London, 1623)

-- *The Tempest* (London, 1623)

-- *As You Like It* (London, 1623)

-- *The Taming of the Shrew* (London, 1623)

Shesgreen, Sean (ed.), *The Criers and Hawkers of London, Engravings and Drawings by Marcellus Laroon* (Aldershot, 1990)

-- *Engravings by Hogarth. 101 Prints* (New York, 1973)

Sibscota, George, *The Deaf and Dumb Man's Discourse. Or A Treatise concerning those that are Born Deaf and Dumb, containing a Discovery of their Knowledge or Understanding* (London, 1670)

Signe from Heaven: Or, a Fearful and Terrible Noise heard in the Ayre at Alborow in the County of Suffoke (London, 1642)

Smith, Verena (ed.), *The Town Book of Lewes 1702-1837*, Sussex Record Society, 69 (Lewes, 1973)

The Spectator, various editions between numbers 4 and 472 [1711-12]

Spedding, James, Ellis, Robert Leslie and Heath, Douglas Denon (eds), *The Works of Francis Bacon*, 14 vols, (London, 1857-74)

Stanford, Maureen (ed.), *The Ordinances of Bristol 1506-1598*, Publications of the Bristol Record Society, 41 (Bristol, 1990)

Stevens, John Captain, *A new Spanish and English dictionary* (London, 1706)

Stevenson, W.H. (ed.), *Records of the Borough of Nottingham, being a series of extracts from the Archives of the Corporation of Nottingham, IV (1547-1625)* (Nottingham, 1882)

Stow, John, *A Survey of London* (1598), ed. Henry Morley as *A Survey of London written in the year 1598* (London, 1912)

Strange, Sir John, *Reports of Adjudged Cases in Courts of Chancery, King's Bench, Common Pleas and Exchequer*, 2 vols (London, 1755)

Strype, John, *Ecclesisatical Memorials, Relating chiefly to Religion, and the Reformation of it, and the emergences of the Church of England under King Henry VIII, King Edward VI and Queen Mary I,* 3 vols (each in two parts) (Oxford, 1882)

Stubbes, Philip, *The Anatomy of Abuses* (1583), ed. Frederick J. Furnivall, The New Shakspere Society, 2 vols (London, 1877-82)

Sturt, George, *The Wheelwright's Shop* (1923), repr. edn (Cambridge, 1993)

Sutton, D. (ed.), *York Civic Records IX*, The Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Society, 138 (Leeds, 1978)

Swift, Jonathan, *Journal to Stella* (covers the years 1710-13) ed. H. Williams, 2 vols (Oxford, 1974).

-- *Directions to Servants* (1745), repr. C. Rawson (London, 1995)

-- as 'Simon Wagstaff', *A Complete Collection of Genteel and Ingenious Conversation According to the most Polite Mode and Method now used at Court, and in the Best Companies of England*, repr. of the 1755 edn (Bristol, 1995)

Swinburne, Henry, *A Treatise of Testaments and last Wills*, 4th edn (London, 1677)

Tait, James (ed.), *Lancashire Quarter Sessions Rolls 1590-1606*, The Chetham Society, new ser., 77 (Manchester, 1917)

The Tatler, nos 1 and 9, [April 1709]

Taylor, Alexander (ed.), *The Works of Symon Patrick, sometime Bishop of Ely*, 9 vols (Oxford, 1858)

Thoresby, Ralph, 'Bell-ringing at Leeds in 1632. A note in the handwriting of Ralph Thoresby', *Miscellanea VI,* The Thoresby Society, 22 (Leeds, 1915), 234

Tomkis, Thomas [?], *Lingua; or the Combat of the Tongue* (London, 1607)

Topsell, Edward, *The History of Four-footed Beasts, Serpents, and Insects* (London, 1658)

Troyer, H. William (ed.), *Five travels scripts commonly attributed to Edward Ward* (New York, 1933)

Tucker, Abraham as 'Edward Search', *Vocal Sounds* (London, 1773)

T[ull], J[ethro], *The Horse-Hoing Husbandry: Or, an Essay on the Principles of Tillage and Vegetation*, 2nd edn (Dublin, 1733)

Twemlow, J.A. (ed.), *Liverpool Town Books*, 2 vols (Liverpool, 1918-35)

Verney, Joseph Guichard Du, *Treatise on the Organ of Hearing*, trans. John Marshall (London, 1737)

A View of the Penal Laws Concerning Trade and Trafick, Alphabetically disposed under proper Heads (London, 1697)

Viles, E. and Furnivall, F.J. (eds), *A Caveat or Warening for Common Cursetors vulgarely called Vagabonds*, Early English Text Society, extra ser., 9 (London, 1869)

Ward, Ned, *The London-Spy, Compleat, In Eighteen Parts* (orig. publ. 1698-1700), 4th edn (1709), repr. by Paul Hyland (East Lansing, Mich., 1993)

The Whitehall Evening-Post, no. 1473, 17-20 February 1728

Whiting, C.E. (ed.), *Two Yorkshire Diaries. The diary of Arthur Jessop and Ralph Ward's journal*, The Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, 117 (Wakefield, 1952)

Williams, Clare (ed.), *Thomas Platter's Travels in England 1599* (London, 1937)

Williams, John Foster (ed.), *The Early Churchwardens' Accounts of Hampshire* (Winchester, 1913)

Williams, J.F. (ed.), *Diocese of Norwich: Bishop Redman's visitation, 1597. Presentments in the Archdeaconries of Norwich, Norfolk and Suffolk,* Norfolk Record Society, 18 (London, 1946)

Williams, William Peere, *Reports of Cases argued and determined in the High Court of Chancery*, 3 vols (London, 1740-9)

Willis, Arthur J.and Hoad, Margaret J. (eds), *Portsmouth Borough Sessions Papers, 1653-1688,* Portsmouth Record Society, 1 (London and Chichester, 1971)

Willis Bund, J.W. (ed.), *Calendar of the Quarter Sessions Papers, 1591-1643*, Worcestershire Historical Society, 11 (Worcester, 1900)

Willsford, Thomas, *Natures Secrets. Or, The Admirable and wonderfull History Of the generation of Meteors* (London, 1658)

Wilson, Frank Percy (ed.), *The Plague Pamphlets of Thomas Dekker* (Oxford, 1925)

Wilson, Thomas, *Arte of Rhetoric* (1560), ed. G.H. Mair (Oxford, 1909)

Wright, Thomas (ed.), *The Autobiography of Joseph Lister of Bradford* (London, 1842)

Secondary sources

Abbott, Mary, *Life Cycles in England, 1560-1720. Cradle to Grave* (London, 1996)

Ackerman, Diane, *A Natural History of the Senses* (London, 1990)

Adorno, Theodor, *In Search of Wagner*, ed. Rodney Livingstone (London, 1981)

Allan, D. G. C., 'The Rising in the West, 1628-1631', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 5 (1952), 76-85

Allen, E. Sprague , 'Chesterfield's Objection to Laughter', *Modern Language Notes*, 38 (1923), 279-87

Almond, Philip C., *Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England* (Cambridge, 1994)

Amussen, Susan Dwyer, *An Ordered Society. Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York, 1988)

Apte, Mahadev L., *Humor and Laughter. An Anthropological Approach* (London, 1985)

Atchley, E.G. Cuthbert F., *A History of the use of Incense in Divine Worship* (London, 1909)

Attali, Jacques, *Noise. The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi, Theory and History of Literature, 16 (Manchester, 1977)

Baddeley, John James, *The Aldermen of Cripplegate Ward from A.D. 1276 to A.D. 1900* (London, 1900)

Bailey, Peter, 'Breaking the sound barrier: a historian listens to noise' in *Body and Society*, 2 (1996), 49-66

Baker, J.H., *An Introduction to English Legal History*, 2nd edn (London, 1979)

Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington, Ind., 1984)

Barbour, Reid, *Deciphering Elizabethan Fiction* (London, 1993)

Barley, M.W. (ed.), *Buildings of the Countryside 1500-1750* (Cambridge, 1990)

Barthes, Roland, *The Responsibility of Forms - critical essays on music, art and representation*, trans. R. Howard (Oxford, 1986)

Basing, Patricia, *Trades and Crafts in Medieval Manuscripts* (London, 1990)

Basso, Keith H., '"Speaking with names" - Language and Landscape Among the Western Apache', in George E. Marcus (ed.), *Rereading Cultural Anthropology* (London, 1992)

Baumann, Max Peter, 'The Ear as Organ of Cognition: Prolegomenon to the Anthropology of Listening' in Max Peter Baumann, Artur Simon and Ulrich Wegner (eds), *European Studies in Ethnomusicology. Historical Developments and Recent Trends* (Wihelmshaven, 1992)

Beales, Philip H., *Noise, Hearing and Deafness* (London, 1965)

Beier, A.L., *Masterless Men. The vagrancy problem in England 1560-1640* (London, 1985)

Bell, W.G., *Unknown London* (1919), ed. E.R. Wethersett (London, 1966)

Bennett, E., *The Worshipful Company of Carmen of London* (London, 1982)

Besant, W., *London in the Time of the Stuarts* (London, 1903)

Bishop, P.J., 'Auscultation before Laennec', *Tubercle*, 37 (1956), 213-15

Blackstone, Geoffrey Vaughan *A History of the British Fire Service* (London, 1957)

Bold, J., 'The Design of a House for a Merchant, 1724' *Architectural History Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain*, 33 (1990), 75-82

Borsay, Peter, *The English Urban Renaissance. Culture and society in the provincial town 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989)

Bourdieu, Pierre, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, 1992)

Bremmer, Jan and Roodenburg, Herman (eds), *A Cultural History of Gesture from Antiquity to the Present Day* (Oxford, 1991)

Bristol, Michael D., *Carnival and Theater. Plebeian Culture and the Structure of authority in Renaissance England* (New York, 1985)

Brownlie, Ian, *The Law Relating to Public Order* (London, 1968)

Brushfield, T.B., 'Britain's Burse, or the New Exchange', *British Archaeological Association News,* 9 (1903), 90-4

Bryson, Anna, 'The Rhetoric of Status: Gesture, Demeanor and the Image of the Gentleman in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England', in Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (eds), *Renaissance Bodies. The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660* (London, 1990)

-- *From Courtesy to Civility. Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998)

Buckley, R.A., *The Law of Nuisance*, 2nd edn (London, 1996)

Burke, Peter, *The historical anthropology of early modern Italy. Essays on perception and communication* (Cambridge, 1987)

Bynum William F. and Porter, Roy (eds), *Medicine and the Five Senses* (Cambridge, 1993)

Camporesi, Piero, *The Fear of Hell. Images of Damnation and Salvation in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Lucinda Byatt (Cambridge, 1990)

-- *The Anatomy of the Senses. Natural Symbols in Medieval and Early Modern Italy*, trans. Allan Cameron (Cambridge, 1994)

Cash, M. (ed.), *Devon inventories of the 16th and 17th centuries*, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 11 (Exeter, 1966)

Cattermole, Paul, *Church bells and Bell-Ringing: a Norfolk profile* (Woodbridge, 1990)

Certeau, Michel de, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York, 1988)

Chapman, Roger, *The Treatment of Sounds in Language and Literature* (Oxford, 1984)

Chidester, David, *Word and Light. Seeing, Hearing and Religious Discourse* (Urbana, Ill., 1992)

Classen, Constance, *Worlds of Sense. Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures* (London, 1993)

Classen, Constance, Howes, David and Synnott, Anthony, *Aroma. The cultural history of smell* (London, 1994)

Comaroff, John and Jean, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Oxford, 1992)

Conrad, R. and Weiskrantz, Barbara C., 'Deafness in the seventeenth century: Into Empiricism' *Sign Language Studies*, 45 (1984), 291-399

Corbin, Alain, *The Foul and the Fragrant. Odour and the Social Imagination* (London, 1986)

-- *Time, Desire, and Horror. Towards a History of the Senses*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1995).

-- *Village Bells. Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-century French Countryside*, trans. Martin Thom (Basingstoke, 1999)

Corfield, Penelope, 'Walking the City Streets. The Urban Odyssey in Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of Urban History*, 16 (1990), 132-74

Cox, John Charles, *Churchwardens' Accounts from the fourteenth century to the close of the seventeenth century* (London, 1913)

Craig, J. S., 'Co-operation and Initiatives - Elizabethan churchwardens' accounts and the parish accounts of Mildenhall', *Social History,* 18 (1990), 357-80

Cressy, David, *Literacy and the Social Order; Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1980)

-- *Bonfires and Bells. National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (London, 1989)

Cruttenden, Alan, *Intonation*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1997)

Cattermole, Paul, *Church bells and Bell-Ringing: a Norfolk profile* (Woodbridge, 1990)

Certeau, Michel de, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York, 1988)

Chapman, Roger, *The Treatment of Sounds in Language and Literature* (Oxford, 1984)

Chidester, David, *Word and Light. Seeing, Hearing and Religious Discourse* (Urbana, Ill., 1992)

Classen, Constance, *Worlds of Sense. Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures* (London, 1993)

Classen, Constance, Howes, David and Synnott, Anthony, *Aroma. The cultural history of smell* (London, 1994)

Comaroff, John and Jean, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Oxford, 1992)

Conrad, R. and Weiskrantz, Barbara C., 'Deafness in the seventeenth century: Into Empiricism' *Sign Language Studies*, 45 (1984), 291-399

Corbin, Alain, *The Foul and the Fragrant. Odour and the Social Imagination* (London, 1986)

-- *Time, Desire, and Horror. Towards a History of the Senses*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1995).

-- *Village Bells. Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-century French Countryside*, trans. Martin Thom (Basingstoke, 1999)

Corfield, Penelope, 'Walking the City Streets. The Urban Odyssey in Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of Urban History*, 16 (1990), 132-74

Cox, John Charles, *Churchwardens' Accounts from the fourteenth century to the close of the seventeenth century* (London, 1913)

Craig, J. S., 'Co-operation and Initiatives - Elizabethan churchwardens' accounts and the parish accounts of Mildenhall', *Social History,* 18 (1990), 357-80

Cressy, David, *Literacy and the Social Order; Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1980)

-- *Bonfires and Bells. National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (London, 1989)

Cruttenden, Alan, *Intonation*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1997)

Davis, Hallowell and Silverman, S. Richard, *Hearing and Deafness*, 3rd edn (New York, 1970)

Davis, Lennard J., *Enforcing Normalcy. Disability, Deafness and the Body* (London, 1995)

Delaney, Alan and Cowan, Robert, *London After Dark* (London, 1993)

Dix, Gregory, *The Shape of the Liturgy,* 2nd edn (London, 1945)

Duffy, Eamon, *The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c.1580* (New Haven, 1992)

Dunkin, Edwin Hadlow Wise, *Church Bells of Cornwall: Their Archaeology and Present Condition* (London, 1878)

Dunlop, Olive Jocelyn and Denman, Richard D., *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour, a History* (London,1912)

Dunn, Barry, 'Sir Joshua Reynold's Deafness', *Medical History*, 17 (1973), 66-8

Dyer, Alan, 'Urban housing: a documentary study of four Midland towns 1530-1700', in *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 15 (1981), 207-18

Elias, Norbert, *The Civilizing Process. The History of Manners*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford, 1978)

Elphick, G.P., *Sussex Bells and Belfries* (Chichester, 1970)

Elton, Geoffrey R. (ed.), *The Tudor Constitution. Documents and Commentary*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 1982)

Emmison, Frederick George, *Elizabethan Life: morals and the Church Courts*, Essex Record Office Publications, 63 (Chelmsford, 1973)

Estabrook, Carl B., *Urbane and Rustic England. Cultural Ties and Social Spheres in the Provinces, 1660-1780* (Manchester, 1998)

Febvre, Lucien, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais*, trans. Beatrice Gottlieb (Cambridge, Mass., 1982)

Feld, Steven, 'Sound as a Symbolic System: The Kaluli Drum' in Charlotte J. Frisbie (ed.), *Explorations in Ethnomusicology: Essays in Honor of David P. McAlleste* (Detroit, 1986).

-- *Sound and Sentiment. Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*, 2nd edn (Philadelphia, 1990)

-- 'Sound Worlds', in Patricia Kruth and Henry Stobart (eds), *Sound. The Darwin College Lectures* (Cambridge, 2000)

Fernandez, James, 'Historians Tell Tales: Of Cartesian Cats and Gallic Cockfights', in *Journal of Modern History*, 60 (1988), 113-27

Finlay, Roger and Shearer, Beatrice, 'Population growth and suburban expansion' in A.L. Beier and Roger Finlay (eds), *London 1500-1700, the making of the metropolis* (London, 1986)

Finnegan, Ruth, *Literacy and Orality, studies in the technology of communication* (London, 1988)

Foyster, Elizabeth, 'A Laughing Matter? Marital Discord and Gender Control in Seventeenth Century England', *Rural History*, 4 (1993), 5-22

Frost, Pauline, 'Yeomen and Metalsmiths: Livestock in the Dual Economy in South Staffordshire 1560-1720' in *Agricultural Historical Review*, 22 (1981), 29-41

Galpin, F.W., *Old English instruments of music. Their history and character* (London, 1910)

George, M. Dorothy, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1930)

Gilmour, Ian, *Riot, Risings and Revolution: governance and violence in eighteenth-century England* (London, 1992)

Goffman, Erving, *Behavior in Public Places. Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings* (New York, 1963)

Goodman, Jordan, 'History and Anthropology', in Michael Bentley (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (London, 1997)

Gouk, Penelope M., 'The Role of Acoustics and Music Theory in the Scientific Work of Robert Hooke', *Annals of Science*, 37 (1980), 573-605

-- 'Some English Theories of Hearing in the Seventeenth Century: Before and After Descartes' in Charles Burdett, Michael Fend and Penelope Gouk (eds), *The Second Sense - studies in hearing and musical judgement from antiquity to the seventeenth century* (London, 1991)

-- *Music, Science and Natural Magic in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, 1999)

Grant, Brian (ed.), *The Quiet Ear. Deafness in Literature* (London, 1987)

Graves, Thornton S., 'Some Pre-Mohock Clansmen', *Studies in Philology*, 20 (1923), 395-421

Greenblatt, Stephen, *Learning to Curse. Essays in Early Modern Culture* (London, 1990)

Griffiths, Paul, *Youth and Authority. Formative Experiences in England 1560-1640* (Oxford, 1996)

Griffiths, Paul, Fox, Adam and Hindle, Steve (eds), *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1996)

Guerer, Annick Le, *Scent. The Mysterious and Essential Powers of Smell*, trans. Richard Miller (London, 1988)

Gunther, R.T. (ed.), *The Architecture of Sir Roger Pratt* (Oxford, 1928)

Hahn, H. George, (ed.), *The Country Myth: motifs in the British novel from Defoe to Smollett* (Frankfurt,1990)

Hamilton, H., *The English Brass and Copper Industries to 1800*, 2nd edn (London 1967)

Harben, H., *A Dictionary of London* (London, 1918)

Harris, George, *The Life of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke,* 3 vols (London, 1847)

Hatcher, John and Barker, Theodore Cardwell (eds) *A History of British Pewter* (London, 1974)

Heal, Felicity, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1990)

Heaton, Herbert, *The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries from the earliest times up to the Industrial Revolution*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1965)

Heltzel, Virgil B., 'Chesterfield and the Anti-Laughter Tradition', *Modern Philology*, 26 (1929), 73-90

Herrup, Cynthia, *The Common Peace, participation and the criminal law in seventeenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1987)

-- 'New shoes and mutton pies: investigating responses to theft in seventeenth-century East Sussex', *The Historical Journal*, 27 (1984), 811-30

Higgins, Paul C., *Outsiders in a Hearing World: a sociology of deafness* (Beverley Hills, 1980)

Hinton, Leanne, Nichols, Johanna and Ohala, John J. (eds) *Sound Symbolism* (Cambridge, 1994)

Hodgson, Kenneth W., *The Deaf and their Problems. A Study in Special Education* (London, 1953)

Holdsworth, William, *A History of English Law,* 13 vols (London, 1922-52)

Holmes, Geoffrey, *Augustan England. Professions, State and Society 1680-1730* (London, 1982)

Holt-White, R., *The Life and Letters of Gilbert White of Selbourne* (London, 1901)

Howes, David (ed.), *The Varieties of Sensory Experience. A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses* (Toronto, 1991)

Hunt, Frederick Vinton, *Origins of Acoustics: The Science of Sound from Antiquity to the Age of Newton* (New Haven, 1978)

Ihde, Don, *Sense and Significance*, Philosophical Series, 31 (Pittsburgh, 1973)

-- *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound* (Athens, Ohio, 1976)

Ingram, Martin, 'Juridical Folklore in England Illustrated by Rough Music', in Christopher Brooks and Michael Lobban (eds), *Communities and Courts in Britain, 1150-1900*

-- 'Ridings, Rough Music and the "Reform of Popular Culture" in Early Modern England', *Past and Present*, 105 (1984), 79-114

Innocent, C.F., *The Development of English Building Construction* (Cambridge, 1916)

Irving, William H., *John Gay's London. Illustrated from the poetry of the time* (Cambridge, 1928)

Jackson, Peter W., *Britain's Deaf Heritage* (Edinburgh, 1990)

Jay, Martin, *Downcast Eyes. The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley, 1994)

Jenkins, L., 'Childs play', *Early Music Today*, 5 (1997), 5-6

Jenner, Mark, 'The Great Dog Massacre', in W. Naphy and P. Roberts (eds), *Fear in Early Modern Society* (Manchester, 1997)

Johnson, Matthew, *Housing Culture. Traditional architecture in an English Landscape* (London, 1993)

Johnson, Walter, *Gilbert White* (London, 1928)

Jones, Dylan M. and Chapman, Anthony J. (eds), *Noise and Society* (Chichester, 1984)

Jones, L.C., *The Clubs of the Georgian Rakes* (New York, 1942)

Josipovici, Gabriel, *Touch, an essay* (New Haven, 1996)

Kelley, David, *The Evidence of the Senses. A Realist Theory of Perception* (London, 1986)

Kemp, Peter, *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea* (Oxford, 1976)

Kent, Joan R., '"Folk Justice" and Royal Justice in early seventeenth century England: A "Charivari" in the Midlands', *Midland History*, 8 (1983), 70-85

Knowles, C.C. and Pitt, P. H., *The History of Building Regulation in London 1189-1972* (London, 1972)

Landau, Norma, *The Justices of the Peace 1679-1760* (Berkeley, 1984)

Lane, Harlan, *When the Mind Hears. A History of the Deaf* (New York, 1984)

Lang, Harry G., *Silence of the Spheres. The Deaf Experience in the History of Science* (Westport, Conn., 1994)

Leppert, Richard, *The Sight of Sound. Music, Representation, and the History of the Body* (London, 1993)

Lillywhite, Bryant, *London Coffee Houses* (London, 1963)

Litten, Julian, *The English Way of Death. The Common Funeral Since 1450* (London, 1991)

Loomes, Brian, *Country Clocks and their London Origins* (Newton Abbot, 1976)

Lowe, Donald M., *The History of Bourgeois Perception* (Chicago, 1982)

Madge, Sidney, *Moulton Church and its Bells* (London, 1895)

Malcolmson, Robert and Mastrois, Stephen, *The English Pig. A History* (London, 1998)

Manning, B., *Village Revolts, social protest and popular disturbances in England, 1509-1640* (Oxford, 1988)

Marsh, Christopher, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth-Century England. Holding their Peace* (Basingstoke, 1998)

Medick, Hans, '"Missionaries in the Rowboat"? Ethnological Ways of Knowing as a Challenge to Social History' in Alf Lüdtke (ed.), *The History of Everyday Life. Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, trans. William Templer (Princeton, 1995)

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *The Primacy of Perception and other essays on phenomenological psychology, the philosophy of art, history and politics*, trans. and ed. James M. Edie (Evanston, 1964)

-- *Phenomenology of Perception* (New York, 1962)

Miall, L.C., *The Early Naturalists. Their Lives and Work (1580-1789)* (London 1912)

Mirzoeff, Nicholas, 'Signs and citizens. Sign language and visual signs in the French Revolution', in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (eds), *Consumption of Culture 1600-1800: image, object and text* (London, 1995)

-- *Bodyscape, Art, Modernity and the ideal figure* (London, 1995)

-- *Silent Poetry. Deafness, sign, and visual culture in modern France* (Princeton, 1995)

Morris, Ernest, *Tintinnabula: Small Bells* (London, 1959)

Neu, Jerome, 'A Tear Is an Intellectual Thing' in *Representations*, 19 (1987), 35-61

Nichols, J. R., *Bells Thro' the Ages. The Founders' Craft and the Ringers' Art* (London, 1928)

North, Thomas, *Church Bells of Northamptonshire: their inscriptions, traditions, and peculiar uses* (Leicester, 1878)

Obelkevich, James, 'Proverbs and social history', in Peter Burke and Roy Porter (eds), *The Social History of Language*, Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture, 12 (Cambridge, 1987)

Ostwald, Peter F., *The Semiotics of Human Sound* (The Hague, 1973)

Page, William (ed.), *Victoria County History - Bedford*, 3 vols (London, 1912)

Paulson, Ronald, *Hogarth*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1992-4)

Pearson, Geoffrey, *Hooligan. A History of Respectable Fears* (Basingstoke, 1983)

Picard, Liza, *Restoration London* (London, 1997)

Platt, Colin, *The Great Rebuildings of Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1994)

Pollock, F. and Maitland, F.W., *The History of English Law Before the time of Edward I*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1911)

Porter, Enid, *Cambridgeshire Customs and Folklore* (London, 1969)

Porter, Roy, *London. A Social History* (London, 1994)

Power, Michael J., 'The East London Working Community in the Seventeenth Century' in Penelope J. Corfield and Derek Keene (eds), *Work in Towns 850-1850* (Leicester, 1990)

Poyatos, Fernando, *Paralanguage. A linguistic and interdisciplinary approach to interactive speech and sound* (Amsterdam, 1993)

Price, Percival, *Bells and Man* (Oxford, 1983)

Pyne, William Henry, *The Costumes of Great Britain* (London, 1808)

Raven, John James, *The Bells of England* (London, 1906)

Rée, Jonathan, *I See a Voice. A Philosophical History of Language, Deafness and the Senses* (London, 1999)

Roberts, Michael, 'Noise as cultural struggle: Tom-tom beating, the British and communal disturbances in Sri Lanka, 1880s-1930s', in Veena Das (ed.), *Mirrors of Violence. Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia* (Oxford, 1990)

Roberts-Austen, W. C., *An Introduction to the Study of Metallurgy*, 5th edn (London, 1902)

Rogers, Nicholas, 'Popular protest in early Hanoverian London', *Past and Present*, 79 (1978), 70-100

-- *Whigs and Cities. Popular Politics in the Age of Walpole and Pitt* (Oxford, 1989)

Rollinson, David, 'Property, Ideology and Popular Culture in a Gloucester Village, 1660-1740', *Past and Present*, 93 (1981), 70-97

Roper, Lyndal, *Oedipus and the Devil. Witchcraft, sexuality and religion in early modern Europe* (London, 1994)

Rushton, Peter, 'Idiocy, the family and the community in early modern north-east England', in David Wright and Anne Digby (eds), *From Idiocy to Mental Deficiency. Historical Perspectives on people with learning disabilities* (London, 1996)

Sacks, Oliver, *Seeing Voices: a Journey into the World of the Deaf* (Berkeley, 1989)

Salgãdo, Gãmini, *The Elizabethan Underworld* (1977), repr. edn (Stroud, 1992),

Schafer, Raymond Murray, *The Tuning of the World* (New York, 1977)

Schutz, Alfred, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, trans. George Walsh and Frederick Lehnert (Evanston, Ill., 1967)

Schwartz, Richard B, *Daily Life in Johnson's London* (Madison, Wis., 1983)

Scott, James C., *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, 1985)

-- *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, 1990)

Screech, Michael A., *Laughter at the Foot of the Cross* (London, 1997)

Seremetakis, C. Nadia, 'Intersection: Benjamin, Bloch, Braudel, Beyond', in C. Nadia Seremetakis (ed.), *The Senses Still. Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity* (Chicago, 1996)

Sharp, Buchanan, *In Contempt of all Authority. Rural Artisans and Riot in the West of England. 1586-1660* (London, 1980)

Sharpe, F., *The Church Bells of Berkshire. Their inscriptions and founders*, 2nd edn (Bath, 1970)

Sharpe, J.A.,'Crime and Delinquency in an Essex parish 1600-1640' in J.S. Cockburn (ed.), *Crime in England, 1550-1800* (London, 1977)

-- *Early Modern England. A Social History 1550-1760* (London, 1987)

Shirley, Ann Frances, *Shakespeare's Use of Off-Stage Sounds* (Lincoln, Neb., 1963)

Shoemaker, Robert B., 'The London "Mob" in the Early Eighteenth Century', *Journal of British Studies*, 26 (1987), 273-304

Shumaker, Wayne, *English Autobiography. Its Emergence, Materials and Form* (Berkeley, 1954)

Slack, Paul, *The Impact of the Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 1985)

Smith, Bruce R., *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England. Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago, 1999)

Smith, Steven R., 'The London apprentices as seventeenth-century adolescents', *Past and Present*, 61 (1973), 149-161

Southworth, Michael, 'The sonic environment of cities', *Environment and Behavior*, 1 (1969) 49-70

Stahlschmidt, J. C. L., *The Church Bells of Kent. Their inscriptions, founders, uses and traditions* (London, 1887)

Stevenson, John, *Popular disturbances in England, 1700-1870* (London, 1979)

Stoller, Paul, *The Taste of Ethnographic Things: The Senses in Anthropology* (Philadelphia, 1989)

-- *Sensuous Scholarship* (Philadelphia, 1997)

Stout, Henry S., *The Divine Dramatist; George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1991)

Taussig, Michael, *Mimesis and Alterity. A Particular History of the Senses* (London, 1993)

Tave, S.M., *The Amiable Humorist. A Study of the Comic theory and criticism of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries* (Chicago, 1960)

Thomas, Keith, *Religion and the Decline of Magic. Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (Harmondsworth, 1973)

-- 'The Place of Laughter in Tudor and Stuart England', *Times Literary Supplement*, 21 January 1977, 77-81

-- *Man and the Natural World. Changing attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London, 1983)

Thompson, E.P., 'Anthropology and the discipline of historical context', Review article in *Midland History*, 1 (1972), 41-55

-- 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism', *Past and Present*, 38 (1967), 56-97

-- *Customs in Common* (London, 1991)

Thuillier, Guy, *Pour une histoire du quotidien au XIXe siècle en Nivernais* (Paris, 1977)

Tyack, George Smith, *A Book about Bells* (London, 1898)

Uglow, Jenny, *Hogarth. A Life and A World* (London, 1997)

Underdown, David, *Fire from Heaven; The Life of an English Town in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1992)

Vincent, David, *Literacy and popular culture. England 1750-1914*, Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture, 19 (Cambridge, 1989)

Vincent-Buffault, Anne, *The History of Tears. Sensibility and Sentimentality in France* (Basingstoke, 1991)

Voestermans, Paul, 'Alterity/Identity: A Deficient Image of Culture', in Raymond Corbey and Joep T. Leerssen (eds), *Alterity, Identity, Image - Selves and Others in Society and Scholarship* (Amsterdam, 1991)

Walker, Nigel, *Crime and Insanity in England. The Historical Perspective* (Edinburgh, 1968)

Wall, Cynthia, *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London* (Cambridge, 1998)

Watt, Tessa, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge, 1991)

Weatherill, Lorna, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*, 2nd edn (London, 1996)

Welch, C., *History of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers of the City of London*, 2 vols (London, 1902)

Whalley, Peter (ed.), *The History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire. Compiled from the manuscript collections of the late learned antiquary John Bridges, Esq.*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1791)

Whinney, Margaret, *Sculpture in Britain, 1530-1830* (Harmondsworth, 1964)

Whiting, Robert, *The Blind Devotion of the People. Popular Religion and the English Reformation*, (Cambridge, 1989)

-- *Local Responses to the English Reformation* (Basingstoke, 1998)

Wilson, Frank Percy, *Plague in Shakespeare's London* (Oxford, 1927)

Wollock, Jeffrey, 'John Bulwer's (1606-1656) place in the history of the deaf', in *Historiographia Linguistica*, 23 (1996), 1-46

Wood, David (ed.), *Paul Ricouer: Narrative and Interpretation* (London, 1991)

Woodward, Jennifer, *The Theatre of Death: the ritual management of royal funerals in Renaissance England 1570-1625* (Woodbridge, 1997)

Woolf, D.R., 'Speech, Text, and Time: the Sense of Hearing and the Sense of the Past in Renaissance England', *Albion*, 18 (1986), 159-94

Woolrych, Austin, *Battles of the English Civil War*, repr. edn (London, 1991)

Wrightson, Keith E., 'Two concepts of order: justices, constables and jurymen in seventeenth century England', in, John Brewer and John Styles (eds.), *An Ungovernable People. The English and their law in the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries* (London, 1980)

-- 'Alehouses, order and reformation' in Eileen and Stephen Yeo (eds), *Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590-1914* (Brighton, 1980)

-- *English Society 1580-1680* (London, 1982)

Theses

Fox, Adam, 'Aspects of the oral culture and its development in early modern England' (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Cambridge, 1992)

Melville, Jennifer Dawn, 'The Use and Organisation of Domestic Space in late seventeenth-century London' (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Cambridge, 1999)

Shepard, Alexandra, 'Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England, with special reference to Cambridge, c.1560-1640' (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Cambridge, 1998)